



Theological Society

No. 224.

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Princeton, N. J.

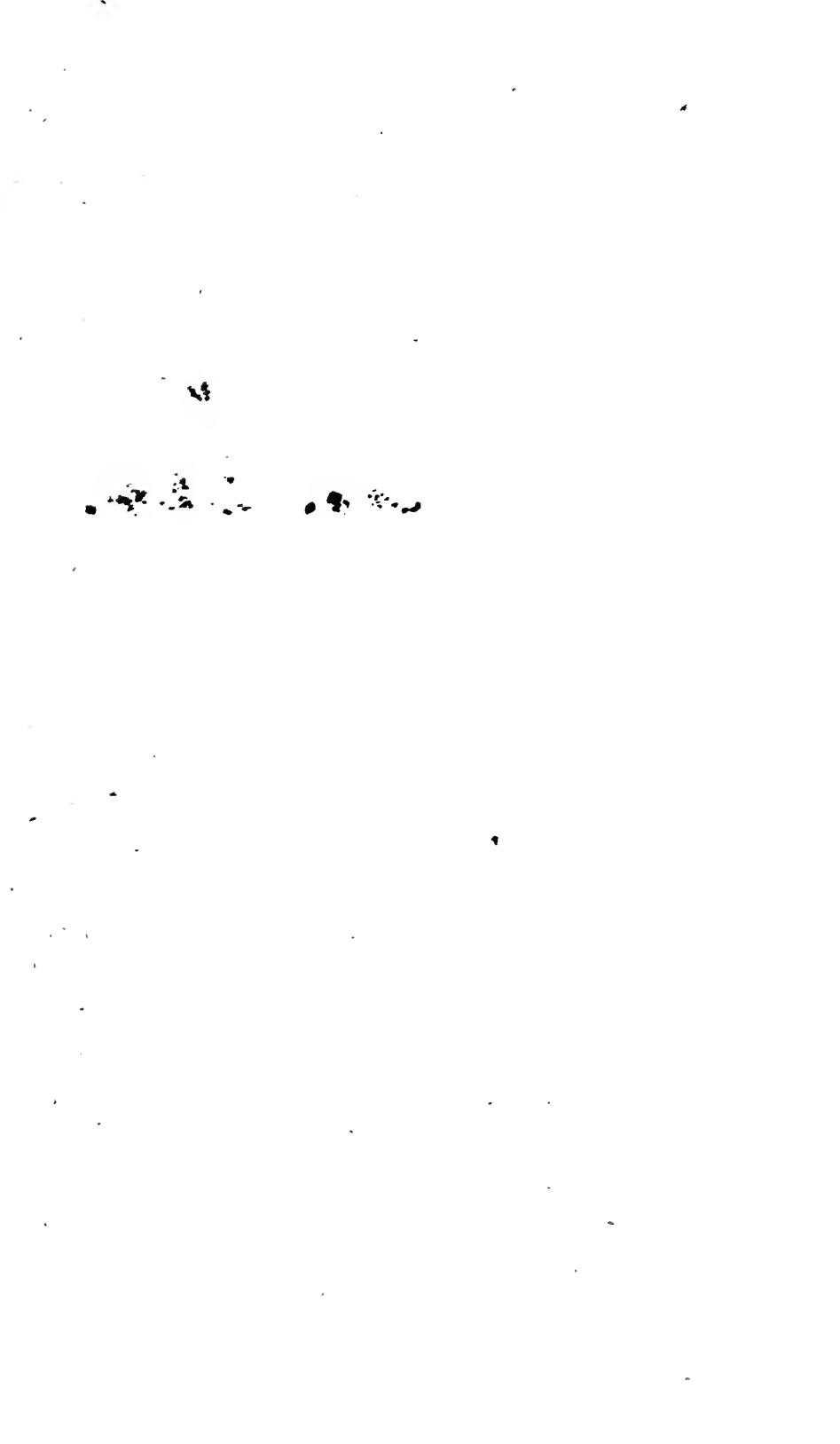
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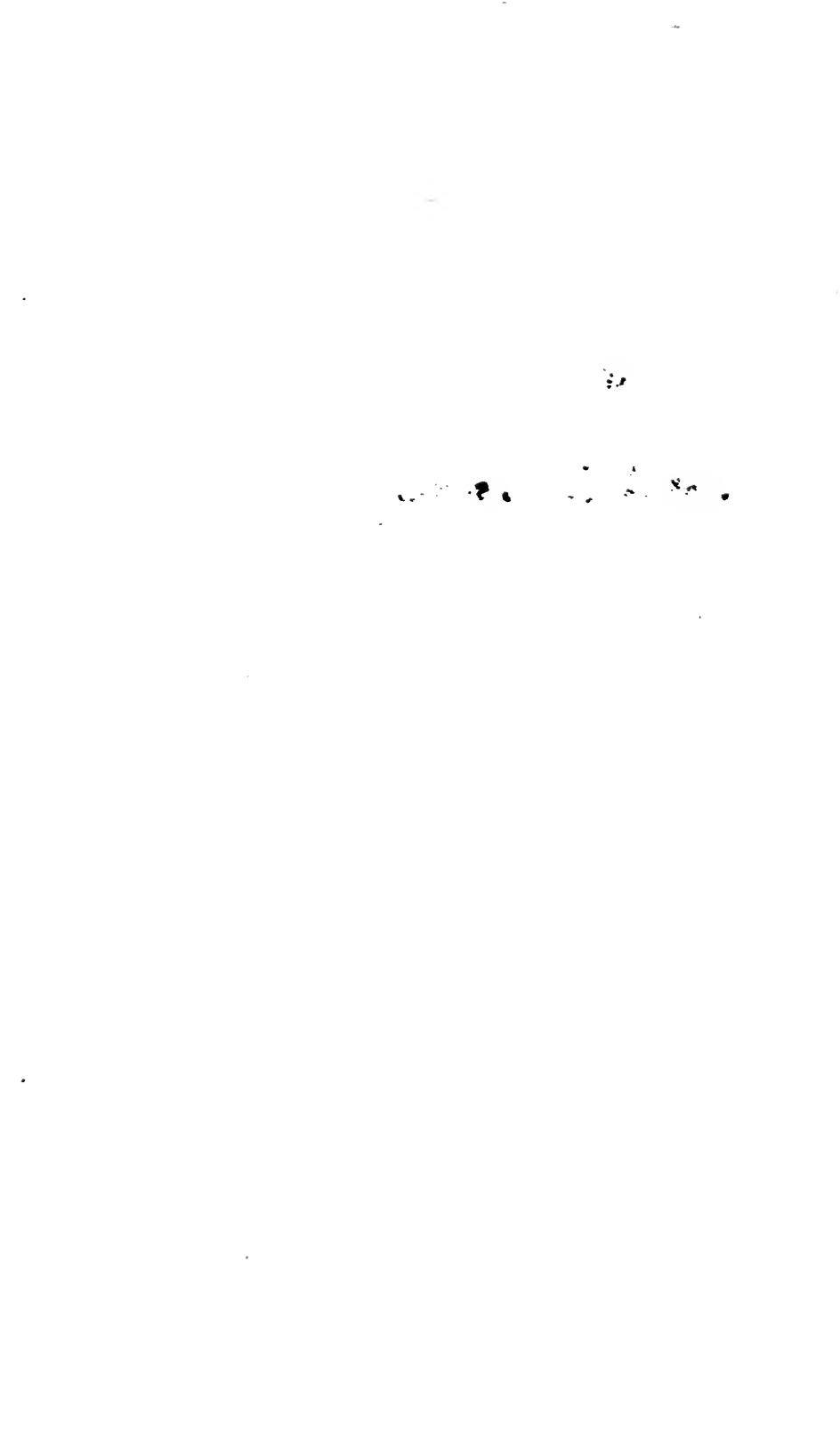
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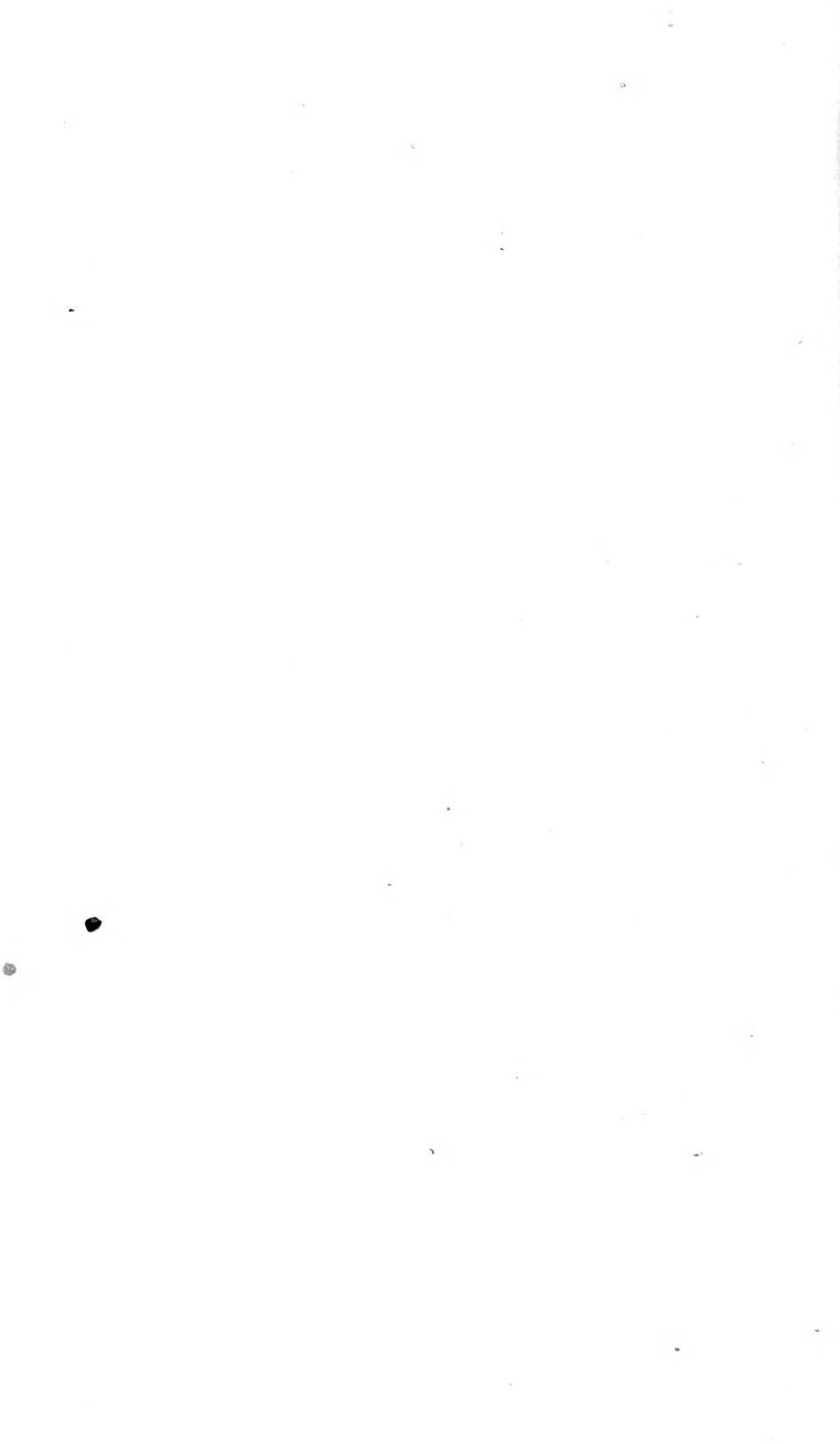
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PARABLE
OF THE
RICH MAN AND LAZARUS;

ILLUSTRATED

IN NINE LECTURES,

DELIVERED IN THE

FIRST UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

IN PORTLAND, MAINE, 1833.

BY MENZIES RAYNER,
PASTOR OF SAID CHURCH.



BOSTON :
PUBLISHED BY MARSH, CAPEN & LYON.

1833.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1833, by
MARSH, CAPEN & LYON, and in the Clerk's office of the District
Court of Massachusetts.

Printed by Kane & Co.
127 Washington Street.

P R E F A C E.

THE following Lectures were delivered in the Universalist Church, in Portland, on Sunday evenings, in May, June, and July, 1833. In compliance with the wishes of many who heard them, they are now given to the public, without material alteration. It will be perceived that the style is that of discourses intended for the pulpit, and is therefore more free and diffusive than if designed only for the press. This it was thought best not to alter, since it is calculated to render the work more intelligible, if not more interesting, to the mass of readers.

The common—we might say orthodox—exposition of the parable has been particularly noticed, and the reasons given for dissenting from it, totally and unequivocally. The context, embracing several chapters, has been carefully examined and illustrated. This particularly increased the number of the Lectures much beyond what was originally contemplated. It gave occasion, however, to illustrate many other parables and important passages, which it is hoped will be found interesting and useful. Indeed, we had the satisfaction to observe, on their delivery, that the congregation, which was crowded through the whole course, discovered no impatience or want of attention.

It is not claimed that these Lectures contain many ideas in relation to this noted parable, which are entirely new, and which no others had ever thought of. The course taken, however, in the illustration is more extended, and more minute than usual ; for it was an especial object to render the whole subject plain and easy of comprehension to every capacity.

TO
HOSEA BALLOU, OF BOSTON,
AND
WALTER BALFOUR, OF CHARLESTOWN, MASS :
This little volume of Lectures is respectfully inscribed,
by their Brother in the Ministry of Reconciliation,
and in the faith of God's universal love.

THE AUTHOR.

LECTURE I.

LUKE xvi. 31.

“If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”

THIS is the close of the parable or history, as it has been variously called, of the Rich Man and Lazarus. It has been considered, and very justly, an important portion of the teachings of our blessed Saviour; and it appears to have been so considered by many writers and religious teachers, particularly on account of the clear and undeniable testimony it is thought to contain, in support of the doctrine of endless sufferings in a future state. The advocates of that doctrine constantly appeal to the representation here given by our Saviour, as furnishing, in their opinion, irrefragable proof of the correctness of this article of their faith. This renders an honest and careful examination of the passage, peculiarly important and interesting. Such an examination we purpose to bestow upon it in this discourse, and some succeeding ones.

This parable, so often referred to, by preachers and writers, is generally illustrated in a very summary manner; in which has been taken for granted, that the commonly received meaning and application of it is unquestionably correct; and those who have given it a more studied and careful examination, have usually

done it in the compass of a single discourse. We have thought that a still more particular and extended illustration of it might be satisfactory and useful.

If it shall appear that this noted parable, or representation, gives no just support or countenance to the tremendous doctrine of unending woe and misery, the advocates of that doctrine will be essentially circumscribed in their alleged proofs of its authenticity; and may well despair of establishing it upon the solid foundation of revealed truth, or as a radical and component part of that gospel, through which, life and immortality have been brought to light.

I shall not take up much time, at present, in agitating the question, whether this account of the rich man and Lazarus is a real history, or a parable; but shall leave it to be decided, or inferred from the succeeding illustration. If it is a real history, then the facts stated must be understood *literally* as described, and according to the common intent of the language employed. If it be a parable, then the representation is not real, but figurative; the circumstances and events described, are *symbolical*; and the language that of metaphor. And this, we expect, will very clearly appear to be the case.

We shall first proceed to consider individually the different characters given to these two men, the rich man and the beggar; and then notice how they are said to have been disposed of, by which we trust it will be manifest, that the whole description has reference to the present life only; and that no part of it relates to the condition of mankind in another world. Now if this shall appear to be the case, it will be evident that it is an entire perversion and misapplication of the passage, to quote it in support of the doctrine of punishment and suffering, in a future state of existence.

We are aware that it would grieve our brethren of the clergy of different denominations, to be deprived of the aid of this "*story*," as Dr. Adam Clark calls it, which they have found so convenient, and so much to their purpose, in contributing to the eloquence of those terrible descriptions of wrath and ruin—fire and fiends, and undying tortures, which have been found to give such animation and effect to camp and protracted meetings; and without which, I fear it would not be uncharitable to suspect, that the religious zeal of many would abate more than half its fervor.

We proceed to notice the different descriptions given of the two men, in the parable under consideration. It commences by saying, "there was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day." This is the whole account that is given of this man's character and circumstances. It is obvious to remark, that he is charged with *no crime*, not even with a single impropriety; nor with the neglect of any one duty. Now, if our Saviour was about to set forth the certainty, and the endless duration of human misery, in a hell of fire in a future state, is it not very singular and unaccountable, that he should designate a person as a prominent subject of it, who, for any thing intimated to the contrary, was upright and inoffensive, and who, according to the account given, as we shall hereafter notice, may be presumed to have had, at least, some very good qualities?

True, it is said, the man was rich. But what of that? so was Abraham rich. God had blessed him greatly, and given him flocks and herds, and silver and gold, &c. So was that noted counsellor rich, the excellent *Joseph* of Arimathea, who begged of Pilate the body of Jesus, that he might give it an honorable burial. To be rich,

is, in itself, no crime, nor is poverty a virtue. I am surprised at the manner in which the commentator, Dr. Adam Clark, comments upon this part of the parable, or *story*, as he calls it. He takes for granted that the death of this rich man, is to be understood, literally, a *temporal* death, the dissolution of the body. He also takes for granted, without inquiring why, or giving any reason for it, that the punishment he is represented as suffering, must of necessity be in another world, after the death of the body. These things being assumed as facts, it would be natural to expect that some *cause* would be assigned for the fearful destiny to which this person was condemned. And accordingly, the commentator, in illustrating the case, goes on to notice, first his *crime*, and secondly his *punishment*. In what, then, does the Doctor make his criminality to consist?

Here we are obliged to wonder at the commentator's statement, which we apprehend is entirely groundless, and without the least authority. He says, "His being *rich*, is, in Christ's account, the *first* part of his *sin*." This is a most singular assertion we confess, especially when he immediately after proceeds to say, "To this circumstance our Lord adds nothing: he does not say, that he was born to a large estate, or that he acquired one by improper methods; or that he was haughty or insolent in the possession of it." Wherein, then, we inquire, does it appear that he was criminal for having a large property? But our commentator goes on to say—"Yet here is the first degree of his *reprobation*, he *got* all he *could*, and *kept* all to *himself*." There certainly is nothing in the account to warrant so uncharitable a declaration concerning him; but there are intimations, which go to oppose such a conclusion, and this the Doctor himself afterwards admits. He says,

“Our blessed Lord has not represented this man as a monster of inhumanity ;” an uncharitable, hardhearted, unfeeling wretch. Of this, says he, “there is not a word spoken by Christ.” Furthermore, on remarking upon the circumstance of the beggar’s desiring to be fed with the crumbs, which fell from the rich man’s table, he says, “And it is likely this desire was complied with ; for it is not intimated that he spurned away the poor man from the gate, or that his suit was rejected.” Moreover, the commentator remarks, “that as we find the rich man desired that Lazarus should be sent with a little water to him, it is a strong intimation, that he considered him under some kind of *obligation* to him ; for had he refused him a few crumbs in his lifetime, it is not reasonable to suppose that he would now have requested such a favor from him, nor does Abraham glance at any such uncharitable conduct on the part of the rich man.”

Now how does this comport with the Doctor’s language concerning him just before ; when he represents him as a sordid, avaricious wretch, who, says he, “*got all he could, and kept all to himself?*” Such inconsistencies always attend an attempt to establish a principle, which has not its foundation in truth.

There is another circumstance mentioned in the parable, to which the commentator has not alluded, but which strongly favors the idea that this man, so far from being sordid and avaricious in his wealth, was even *benevolent* and *charitable* ; and that this was his known and acknowledged character. The circumstance is this, that the beggar is said to have been “*laid* at his gate.” He is not represented as going and laying himself there, of his own accord ; and he may be supposed, from his diseased condition, to have been

incapable of such an exertion. But he was *laid* at this rich man's gate—probably by his friends, and they certainly would have chosen to place him, where they had reason to believe he would be most favorably noticed.

Where would *you*, my hearers, direct, or place a needy friend of yours, whom you wished to assist in obtaining some charitable relief? Would you take him to the door of a notorious miser, whose detestable avarice had closed every avenue of his heart against the cries of the needy and desolate. Or, would you take him to the gate of one who, together with the ability, was known to possess the disposition to relieve the wretched, and to pity the woes of suffering humanity? To the latter, no doubt. So this poor man, oppressed with infirmity, covered with sores, and miserably destitute, was, by his friends, no doubt, laid at the gate of this rich man, because they had reason to believe he would there meet with compassion and kindness, and be fed, at least, with the *crumbs* of the table of that hospitable mansion. Every thing in the account, if taken literally, favors such a conclusion; for even the *dogs*, it would appear, had not been accustomed to drive travellers from this *friendly gate*, and therefore, discovering no signs of fierceness or rage, they came fawning round the meekly imploring sufferer, “and licked his sores.”

I am surprised, therefore, that the above-named critical commentator, in describing the character or the crime, as he calls it, of the rich man, should strangely, and most gratuitously assert, that “in Christ's account—the *first* part of his *sin*, was his being rich.”—that this was the “first degree of his reprobation, that he got all he *could*, and kept *all* to himself.”

But this rich man was clothed, says the parable, in *purple* and *fine linen*. I know not that there is any sin in wearing cloth of a certain fabric, or of a particular color and texture. But the abovenamed commentator says, concerning the rich man, that “our Lord lays this down, (that is, his wearing purple and fine linen)—‘as a *second* cause of his *perdition*.’ ” I remember that in Solomon’s description of a *virtuous woman*, he says, “her household are clothed with *scarlet*,” and that her own clothing is “silk and purple,” and moreover, that—“she maketh *fine linen*, and selleth it, and delivereth girdles unto the merchant.” Lydia also, of Thyatira, who was “a worshipper of God, whose heart the Lord opened”—was a “seller of purple.” And furthermore, we find it was divinely directed, that the garments for the High-priest, under the law, should be, in part, of “*purple* and *fine-twined linen*.”

To this circumstance, we may again have occasion to advert, in the course of our illustration of the parable. Dr. Clarke, in relation to the rich man, remarks, that “purple was a very precious and costly stuff; but, our Lord does not say, that in the use of it, he (the rich man,) exceeded the bounds of his income, nor of his rank in life; nor is it said that he used his superb dress to be an agent to his crimes, by corrupting the hearts of others.” Yet he says—“our Lord lays this down as a *second* cause of his *perdition*!” We wonder the Dr. did not go on to infer—which he certainly might have done with equal propriety—that it was very dangerous to the soul, to wear purple and fine linen!—and why he did not subjoin a caution to his readers against clothing themselves with garments of this description,

seeing, as he supposes, it was one of the "*causes* of the rich man's *perdition*."

You must excuse me, my hearers, if I find it difficult to treat such a statement with seriousness, though made by a learned Doctor of Divinity.

But we proceed to notice that the man described in the parable, was not only rich, and clothed in purple and fine linen, but he "fared sumptuously every day." This is put down, by the commentator as his *third* crime—and the "*third cause* of his perdition." We confess we can see no reason for it. Solomon says, "There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and enjoy good—This also I saw that it was from the hand of God." And Moses says to the Israelites,—“The Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land—a land of wheat, and barley, and vines and fig-trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive and honey, a land wherein thou shall eat bread without scarceness, thou shall not lack any thing in it;”—and, says he, “when thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which he hath given thee.” And moreover. “Thou shalt remember the Lord thy God; for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth.”

Now it should be observed that this rich man was a descendant of Abraham, and he lived under the *Jewish* dispensation, in which abundance of temporal good things were promised as the reward of obedience. Hence the wise man says—“Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase; so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.” The same commentator acknowledges, and says—“this rich man is not accused of having eaten food which was prohibited by

the law.—It is true, he is said to have *feasted*, or *fared sumptuously*, every day ; but our Lord does not intimate that this was carried to excess, or that it ministered to debauch.”—Furthermore, he says—“ his *probity* is not attacked, nor is he accused of any of those crimes which pervert the soul, or injure civil society.” In fact, my friends, he is not charged with a single crime of any sort. True, he is said to have fared *sumptuously*. But we do not know exactly the extent of the meaning of that term in those days. Luxury had probably not then arisen at the height it now is : commerce was not so much extended as it is at present, and there was not as great a variety of delicacies at command. And I expect there is little doubt, that there are many professing *Christians* in our time, who fare as sumptuously every day, as this rich man did. Providence had indeed blessed him with abundance, and he enjoyed it probably—for nothing appears to the contrary—with gratitude to his Maker, and, as is strongly intimated, with feelings of benevolence and charity towards his more needy and dependent neighbors.

You are sensible, my hearers, that a very different representation has often been given of the character and conduct of this rich man,—both in sermons and in commentaries that have been made upon the parable before us. He has been called the *rich glutton*; the unfeeling, selfish, voluptuous wretch, who thought of nothing and cared for nothing, but his own ease, worldly grandeur, and carnal gratification. Even the celebrated commentator before referred to, although his description of him is comparatively favorable, and he admits that, “ compared with thousands, he was not only blameless, but a virtuous man ;” yet, yielding to the common tradition, that the hell in which he is described as being

“in torments,” is a place of punishment in a future state, he is anxious to find some cause assigned for his tremendous destiny—some sufficient reason for the fearful sentence, which at his death was supposed to be executed upon him. And therefore, although he cannot find him accused of any criminal action, yet he concludes that he was “an *indolent* man, who *sought*, and *had* his portion in *this* life, and was not at all concerned about *another*.”

Now, how can it be determined that he had no concern about another life? The account given says nothing of the kind. True, he had a good portion of the things of *this* life, and fared well as to worldly enjoyments. But this, according to St. Paul's opinion, was nothing against him, for he says, “godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and also of that which is to come.” But mankind, in this world, are subject to many vicissitudes and reverses, both as nations and as individuals. Sometimes they are prosperous and happy, in the enjoyment of peace and plenty; sometimes they are subjected to disappointments and troubles, and are in circumstances of adversity, bereavement and sorrow. Of this, the Jews, as a people, had frequent experience; and to these changes, individuals in all ages have been liable. They are incident to our condition in this world, and are, no doubt, wisely ordered and directed by the overruling providence of God for the most important purposes, “Thou shalt consider in thine heart, (says Moses to Israel,) that as a father chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee, that he may humble thee, and that he may prove thee to do thee good at thy latter end.” Solomon says, “In the day of prosperity be

joyful, but in the day of adversity *consider*." When God in his providence smiles upon us and sends us abundance, it is that we may enjoy it, and that we may fare sumptuously ; and *not* to do it, would be rather an indication of ingratitude, as it would appear like slighting and spurning the divine bounty.

This rich man, whose condition and character we have been considering, was richly supplied, and he fared richly, and there is not the least intimation that he did not do it innocently and gratefully. There is not the smallest hint given that he was intemperate in the use of his abundance, or that he was haughty, selfish, hard-hearted, or unkind. In short, however strange the statement may perhaps appear to some of my hearers, there is nothing contained in the account given in the passage, which intimates, either that he was a bad man, or that he was not as good in every respect, and as virtuous and pious, as was Lazarus, the *beggar*, who was laid at his gate, full of sores.

To be sure, preachers and writers of nearly all denominations, have long determined, and constantly taught, that the rich man is in a *hell of torments*, in the invisible world, or world of spirits ; and they have concluded, of course, that he must have been a bad man, a vile sinner, an *ungodly wretch* ! But there certainly is nothing in the account given in the passage, to authorize or support such a conclusion. Our Saviour has told us that he was rich, and richly clothed, and well fed, and that is all. He has not said a word about his *moral* or *religious* character, good or bad. But we have done with him for the present.

Another character is introduced in the passage, and now in order, claims our attention. We shall consider him as we have the other, as an individual person ; and

in this view shall follow them both through the whole account that is given of them, that we may see whether the common opinion is correct and can be sustained. After which we shall endeavor to illustrate the parable according to our own views of its import and intention.

“ And there was a certain beggar, named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate full of sores.”—This is supposed to have been a person of a very different character from the former, whom we have just been considering. And so he was, with respect to his bodily condition, and outward circumstances. He was *poor*, and meanly clad, hungry, and destitute of needful food; and moreover, he labored under sore bodily affliction, which appears to have rendered him incapable of exertion.—He was full of sores.

But nothing is said of his piety or virtue, of his humility or patience—of his love and reverence for the Supreme Being, and resignation to his will; or of the hope of salvation and future blessedness, which sustained him in his present sufferings.

There is nothing in the description given of him by which it appears that he was, in a moral or religious view, any better than the rich man, at whose gate he was laid. He was indeed *poor*. But poverty is no certain evidence of piety, or moral worth. Poor people, as well as others, are often—I lament to say it—very destitute of upright or religious principle, and very wicked and worthless characters.

Lazarus was a *beggar*. By what means, or from what cause or causes, he was reduced to such an extremity, we are not told. It might have been by unavoidable casualties or misfortunes; or it might have been the consequence of his own imprudence, idleness, or negligence. At any rate, the circumstance

of his being a beggar, affords no argument in his favor. Want and distress are always, indeed, a just appeal to our sympathy and compassion, whatever may have been the occasion of them: but they are not indubitable claims upon our good opinion of the character of the sufferers.

When beggars come to your gate or door, and relate their tale of misfortunes and woes, however you may be disposed to pity and relieve them, you do not think yourselves obliged, at once, to give them entire credit for extraordinary piety, or strict purity of character; and scarcely, sometimes, for undisguised honesty; for experience has taught you, that beggars are but too often base impostors.

I make these remarks, my brethren, the correctness of which, I am sure you will appreciate, that you may see, that our Saviour, in the parable, or statement under consideration, is not describing in the former case, a *vicious* character, nor in the latter, a *religious* one—for neither virtue nor vice, piety nor impiety, is declared or predicated of either of them. So that in this view, it would be most unreasonable to suppose that our Saviour is here pointing out, and placing in contrast, the fit subjects of *heaven* and *hell*—of happiness, and of torment, in a future state of being, as appears to have been generally understood, and which is the common *orthodox* opinion.

We have not yet entirely done noticing the short description given of Lazarus. We have noticed him as a beggar, lying at the gate of the rich man; and the account says, he was "*full of sores.*" This circumstance, added to his destitute condition, rendered his situation truly a deplorable one. But since it determines nothing as to his moral or religious character, it

cannot designate him as a proper object, either of the divine approbation, or displeasure. For it is in reference to such dispensations of Providence, that the wise man says—"all things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked, to the good, and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not; as is the good, so is the sinner, and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath." The pious and upright *Job*, was smitten by the Lord with "sore boils, from the sole of his foot unto his crown;" and the treacherous *Gehazi*, the servant of *Elijah*, was smitten with an incurable leprosy. They were both covered with sores, though their moral and religious characters were very different.

I do not mean to express the opinion that *Lazarus* was *not* pious; I only say that his being a beggar, and full of sores, afford no proof that he was. But further, he desired to be "fed with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table." This has sometimes been urged as an evidence of the beggar's *humility*—his patient resignation to his condition, and the elevation of his affections and hopes above the enjoyments and the prospects of this world; and that all he desired, was merely something to sustain life during the remainder of his earthly pilgrimage. However, the most that can be made of this part of the representation is, that it is a perfectly *natural* one. Beggars do not ask for the *best* that the house affords, but usually petition for some *cast-off clothing*, or some fragments, or *leavings of the table*, to supply their immediate and urgent necessities. And to this effect is the statement concerning *Lazarus*. He "desired to be fed with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table." And equally natural is

the circumstance, to which we have before adverted—that the “dogs came and licked his sores.”

All these, apparently literal statements of facts, have, we doubt not, an important reference and meaning, beyond what would at first be suggested to a hasty reader, or a superficial examiner. We shall attend to them in due season; but here is not the place for it. We are now considering the passage, as though it contained a *historical* description of *literal* facts; embracing, not only the characters, and the condition of these two men, in this world, but their eternal destinies in a future state. We trust, however, as we proceed, it will appear, and be more and more evident, that such is not the meaning and scope of the passage.

But we have arrived at a very important crisis, in the history. A new and momentous exhibition opens before us, in which are displayed, in contrast, scenes and events of the most surprising nature, and of thrilling interest.

“And it came to pass—(says the account,) that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: the rich man, also died, and was buried.” It would seem, according to the representation here given, as if they both died at once, or very nearly at the same time; at least, there is no account of any thing that occurred between the exit of the one, and of the other. But there is a very great difference in the statements of the immediately succeeding results. They must be noticed distinctly, and particularly.

There is no mention made of the immediate occasion or circumstances of the death of either of them;—whether it was sudden and unexpected, or lingering disease had gradually wasted all the energies of life.

Nor is notice given of any difference in the state of their minds. It is not intimated that the one died in the triumphs of faith and hope, and joyful anticipation:—that death approached him as a friendly messenger, mild and without a terror; and that his departure hence was resigned, serene and peaceful.

Nor is it noted of the other, that he died in agony and horror, and breathed his last, with a mind surcharged with guilt, and black despair.

Nothing of this kind is mentioned; and vague conjecture should not be allowed to supply the place of facts denied.

But they both were subjected to the common fate of mortals—they both died; which at once put a final period, alike to the enjoyments of the one, and to the sufferings of the other, in this world.

Here we must, for the present, leave them. For the time already occupied in this introductory lecture, admonishes me to bring it to a close; in the expectation of renewing the consideration of the important subject, the next Sunday evening.

Regarding the account contained in the passage, as an authentic statement of *facts*, and *circumstances*, we have examined and illustrated the condition and the characters of the two individuals, in every particular, so far as they are described or intimated in the record. And concerning *both* these persons, presented in this parable, or history, we make this general remark, before suggested, and which we wish may be kept in mind; namely, that neither of them is reprehended for any crime, nor commended for any excellence. As to their moral or religious character, the account is entirely silent.

Now this circumstance is, we think, a very strong objection to the commonly received opinion, that this passage describes the eternal condition of two individuals in another world, according to their conduct in this probationary state, (as it is called.) And equally unreasonable is it to suppose that it was intended to represent the different and eternal condition of the righteous, and of the wicked at large, in a future state, when there is not a word said about righteousness or wickedness, innocence, forgiveness, or guilt, in the whole account.

These considerations will, I think, lead you to entertain some doubts, as to the correctness of the exposition, which has been commonly given of this remarkable portion of the teachings of our Saviour, and the manner in which it has been applied. One part of the passage has been appealed to, as often perhaps, and with as much confidence, as any other in the bible, in proof of the most appalling doctrine that ever was taught—that of the inconceivable and never-ending sufferings and torments of a large portion of our fellow-beings. If, on careful examination, it shall be found that this passage does not contain the doctrine, nor yield it any support, its claims to credit will be greatly weakened in your minds; and at which, I am sure you would all *rejoice*. I will not believe—I cannot admit the unnatural supposition, that one of you really *wishes* that the doctrine of unending suffering and torture might be substantiated as true. A monster of depravity only, can possess or harbor such a disposition.

Concerning, then, the true meaning, and the just application of the subject which we have undertaken to illustrate, and in ascertaining which, your speaker may claim to feel equally interested with his audience, it is

requested that you would lay aside preconceived opinions and prejudices, which may have been imbibed, and suspend your judgment in the premises, until the investigation shall be finished. And may God give us soundness of mind, cause us to be governed in our inquiries, by correct principles, and bring us to the knowledge of the truth, as it is in the gospel of his Son Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

LECTURE II.

LUKE xvi. 31.

“ If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.

IN illustrating the account given of the rich man and Lazarus ; considering it, as it appears to have been commonly understood, as a literal relation of facts and circumstances concerning two individuals, we proceeded, in a former discourse, to mark the history given of each of them, to the close of their earthly career. The passage tells us they both died. But this is not all. It represents them both as still existing, though in a different state, and in very different circumstances. These we are now to consider.

And first, the disposition that was made of the *beggar*, at, or subsequently to, his death. “ It came to pass,—says the account,—that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom.” It would be difficult, we think, to reconcile the statements here given, with the idea that the whole account is not to be understood as a *paraboli cal* representation or allegory, rather than as a statement of facts and actual occurrences.

What are we to understand by the phrase “ *Abraham’s bosom,*” into which the beggar is said to have been carried? And what, by his being carried there by

the *angels*? We know the common opinion of the meaning of this description is, that the beggar died a *natural* death, and that his immortal soul immediately ascended to *heaven*—being conveyed, or conducted thither by invisible beings called angels,—one part of whose office is supposed to be, to attend upon the righteous, as ministers and guardians, during their lives upon earth, and at the moment of death, to convey their souls to a place of immortal rest and felicity, in the invisible world. And this opinion is probably founded upon this particular passage as much as upon any other, or as upon all others in the bible.

There are, however, objections to this view of the account, which may well cause us to hesitate as to its correctness. It may be remarked, that it is not said, that when the beggar died, his spirit, or his immortal soul, was carried to Abraham's bosom; but that the beggar was carried there, that is, in his entire person, as the terms fairly and literally import. Now, does any one believe that the beggar was taken to heaven, soul and body? we expect not. But we do not mean to lay much stress upon this circumstance. Nor shall we, in this place, inquire particularly into the meaning of the word *angels*, here employed, nor what is to be understood by their *carrying* the beggar, and placing him in the situation described. In another part of the illustration these circumstances will receive due attention. So likewise will the phrase—"Abraham's bosom." At present we would briefly remark, that these terms, though evidently *figurative*, have, by common consent, been supposed to refer to a state of happiness beyond the present life. Cruden, in his concordance of the bible, in explaining the phrase, says, "Lazarus was in

a place of *rest*, where he had communion with the *saints*, and enjoyed the same felicity with Abraham, the friend of God; and *this* place was none other than *heaven*."

Now, this opinion must have been adopted, from its harmonizing with the generally received import of the account, when taken together, and not from the occurrence of the phrase in other parts of the scripture, nor from its peculiar fitness to describe such a place or state. For, let it be remarked, this is the *only* place in the bible, in which the most distant intimation is given of any one, at death, going or being conveyed to *Abraham's bosom*. It is declared that God is the Father of the spirits of all flesh, and that at death, "the spirit shall return unto God that gave it." Our Saviour, on the cross, yielded up the ghost, saying, "Father, into thy *hands* I commend my spirit." And he told his disciples, before his departure from them, that he would go and prepare a place for them, and would come again and receive them to himself, and that where he was they should be also.

St. Stephen, at his martyrdom, saw the heavens opened, and the divine glory displayed, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God; and he cried, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." St. Paul encourages Christians with the assurance that "if our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God; a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

But where is the happiness of the future life represented by being in Abraham's bosom? certainly no where in the bible, unless it be in this passage, and we are persuaded it is not so described here. And where, we inquire further, would be the fitness of such a

representation,—any more than if it should have been set forth by being in the bosom of Adam, or Enoch, or Moses, or Isaiah, or any of those holy prophets, by whose mouth God hath spoken of the restitution of all things, since the world began?

It should be observed that we are still considering the account, according to the sense in which it has been commonly understood; stating all along our objections to such an interpretation of the passage, and showing why, in our opinion, it is not and cannot be the correct one. The account of the beggar closes with the notice, that he was “carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom.” The fate of the *rich man* is then described.

It should be remarked, in relation to the death of the beggar, that no account is given of his burial. But of the rich man it is said, he also “died and was *buried*.” Taking the account as a literal statement of facts, preachers and expositors have here indulged in much fancy and conjecture. They have supposed that the beggar, immediately at his death attended by few, if any, friends or acquaintance, was hurried away without ceremony and without regret, to an obscure and lonely grave, where his remains were rudely or carelessly deposited, without a tear, and without a stone to mark the spot.

The funeral of the rich man has been represented as attended by a numerous train, accompanied by an imposing exhibition of pomp and circumstance, with a superb coffin, and a richly garnished sepulchre, as the depositories of his formerly pampered, but now untenanted earthly tabernacle. Dr. Clarke, in his commentary, lends his countenance to such conjectures. He says—“although the circumstance (of burial) in

the case of Lazarus, is not mentioned, yet he was *buried*, no doubt—necessity required this; but he had the burial of a *pauper*;—while the pomp and pride of the other followed him to the tomb.”

The passage certainly warrants no such conclusions; they are altogether imaginary. But we come now to the most important statement concerning the rich man. He died, and was buried;—and what more? Alas, for him, “in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments.”

You well know, my hearers, what has been the generally inculcated, and generally received opinion, as to the meaning of this clause, in the account under consideration. It is, that the *soul*, or spirit, of this man, at his death, went immediately to a place of torment in another world. Yet this is not stated; and the circumstances of the description are unfavorable to such an idea: they rather intimate that the *entire man*, body and soul, went into hades, or hell, as it is called. A spirit hath not flesh and bones, and bodily organs. But this man is represented as still having *eyes*,—and a *tongue also*, which being parched with heat and drought, he desired that Lazarus,—who is also represented as still possessing his bodily parts, might be sent to him, to “dip the tip of his *finger* in water, and cool his tongue.”

These circumstances stated in the passage, certainly do not well comport with the opinion, that it is to be understood as describing the real and individual condition of these two persons, or rather, of the disembodied spirits of these two persons in the invisible world.

But what goes to render such an opinion of the meaning and design of the passage still more doubtful,

and its correctness much more improbable, is the circumstance to which I am now about to direct your attention, and upon which I beg your deliberate and candid reflection. It is—that there is *no other* description of the kind, or similar to it in the whole bible. We read both of good and bad men dying, and as it is sometimes expressed—giving up the ghost—falling asleep—being gathered to their fathers, &c. But in no other account except this, are we told of any one that died, and who then went, or was conveyed, to *Abraham's bosom*. And likewise, on the other hand,—and on which I wish particularly to remark in this place,—we have no other account in all the bible of any one's dying, and then lifting up his eyes *in hell*. Nor is it declared or intimated of any one, however wicked in this world, that at his death, or after his death, he went, or his immortal soul or spirit went, to a place or state of suffering in another world, or that he awoke up—or lifted up his eyes in torments. Nothing of the kind is mentioned in a single instance, either in the old or new testament. And yet we have a minute and circumstantial description of the death of some of the vilest characters,—the most cruel and ungodly wretches that ever lived. In noticing a few cases only, where shall we begin?

In the days of Moses, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, were chief men in the congregation of Israel. But they presumptuously and wickedly rebelled against the Lord; and they, and the company who adhered to them, were suddenly cut off from the land of the living, by a fearful judgment; as recorded in the 16th chapter of Numbers. But what is said of them? Their tremendous fate is described as follows. Moses had

publicly declared that if those men should die the common death of all men, or if they should be visited after the visitation of all men, then the Lord had not sent him. "But, (said he) if the Lord make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, &c. then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the Lord. And it came to pass, (says the history) as he had made an end of speaking—that the ground clave asunder that was under them: and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. They and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they *perished from among the congregation.*" Here is the extent of their fate, according to the description. Nothing is said of any wrath or punishment that awaited them in another world. It is only said that the earth swallowed them up alive, and they perished from among the congregation.

An orthodox divine treating upon the subject might, indeed, and probably would, add a great flourish to the account, and tell, not only how these wicked men went down into the pit, and were swallowed up in the earth, but also, how their immortal souls sank down into the unfathomable depths of a fiery lake of vengeance and unceasing torture, among fallen angels and horrid ghosts who inhabit there. With such an exhibition he might amuse or terrify his audience, by his powers of description, and his astonishing eloquence. But it would be without any authority or support derived from the record which furnished his subject. Moses knew nothing and believed nothing of such terrors and

torments awaiting the rebellious Korah and his company, in another state of existence, or he would doubtless have declared them, as an additional warning to the congregation of Israel.

We have dwelt at some length upon this case, because it is a notable one, and very particularly stated. We will now refer to a few additional cases, as applicable to that point in our subject which we are now considering.

Ahab, was one of the wickedest, and most abominable of the Kings of Israel. The historian says of him, that he "did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord." Of the like character also was King Omri, his father, and Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, and, indeed, nearly all the Kings of Israel. But what does the sacred historian say of these wicked men, when he records their death? does he intimate that future scenes of woe and misery awaited them, as the just punishment of their crimes in this world? Nothing of the kind is intimated. But it is simply said of them, in common with others of a very different character, that they "slept with their fathers."

You doubtless remember the story of the ungrateful *Absalom*, who treacherously sought to supplant his father in the government of Israel,—and the sudden and singular manner of his death; and you have read the account of David's sore lamentation on the occasion. We have it in the 18th chapter of the 2d book of Samuel.—The base ingratitude of this untoward son could not eradicate, or even abate the ardent affection of the *generous father*. O God of mercies! Art thou less compassionate than earthly fathers! The circum-

stances of this case are too remarkable to be passed over without more particular notice.

When the army that was with David were going forth to battle against the collected forces of Absalom, David charged the principal officers—Joab and others, saying, “Deal gently, for my sake, with the young man, even with Absalom.” And when the battle was terminated in favor of David, and a messenger was sent to inform him, his first and most anxious inquiry was,—not what was the grand result of the sanguinary contest: no; but the King said—“Is the young man, Absalom, safe?” Not receiving a definite answer, he bade him stand aside; and immediately another messenger came, and said—“Tidings, my Lord the King: for the Lord hath avenged thee this day, of all them that rose up against thee. And the King said unto Cush, (the messenger) Is the young man Absalom safe? And Cush answered—The enemies of my Lord the King, and all that rise up against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is.” The meaning was well understood by David. It was, that the young man was no more; that he had fallen a sacrifice to his own treachery and vile ambition. The shout of victory gave him no joy; a defeat—could the life of that rebellious son have been preserved—would have been greatly preferred. “And the King was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept; and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would to God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!”

I have cited this portion of sacred history, because, in itself it is exceedingly interesting; and because it suggests a remark which goes directly to the point

which we are now considering, namely, whether there is any instance in all the scriptures, besides the parable, or account contained in the passage we are illustrating, in which it is said, or intimated of any one, that at, or subsequently to his death, he went, or was conveyed to a place of *misery*; or is declared to be in torment? We claim that, setting aside the solitary case of the rich man in the parable, there is no such account or intimation in the bible.

Is any thing of the kind suggested, concerning the fate of the perfidious Absalom? No, nothing. Does David the King, his excellent father,—in the bitterness of his grief, discover any anxiety, or express any apprehension as to what might be the destiny of his ungrateful son in another world,—dying as he did, in the midst of his wicked career of rebellion and guilt? No; not a word or a sigh escapes him, which indicates that any part of his distress was occasioned by fears or anxieties of such a nature, or from such a source.

And will the great Father of all be less affectionate, less compassionate, towards his *most erring*—*most ungrateful*, and *most rebellious* offspring? and consign them over to a death that never dies, and to torments which shall never end? We would not—we ought not—we cannot believe it.

I have still to recite to you the account of the death of some very wicked persons, as recorded in the scriptures of the *New Testament*. Shall we advert to the case of the wretched *Judas*? He had been a disciple of Jesus, had seen his miracles, and listened to his teachings. In an evil hour—being greedy of gain,—for thirty pieces of silver he betrayed his

Master into the hands of his cruel enemies ; by whom he was abused, insulted, and most unjustly condemned : which, when Judas saw, he repented,—was overwhelmed with grief—restored his unrighteous gain—confessed his guilt,—declared the innocence of Jesus—and went out and hanged himself, or, as some think it should be understood, was suffocated with grief, his bowels gushed out, and he died, doubtless in the utmost distress and horror. What further is said of him? Nothing. No account that is given of him says any thing of his going to hell, or that, after death, he lifted up his eyes being in torments. Nor did he, in his horror of mind, while living, express any dread or apprehension of such a destiny in a future state.

Shall I refer you to the description that is given of the death of Ananias and Sapphira? The account as, stated in the 5th of Acts, is doubtless familiar to you all. At the time when a community of goods prevailed among the early Christians, Ananias was detected in a dishonest transaction concerning the sale of some land. Pretending to put the whole amount into the common stock, he kept back part of the price, and reserved it to himself. Peter sternly charges him with the fraud ; and with wilful lying. “*Ananias!* (said he) why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie unto the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart?” &c.—When, mark his sudden fate—“He fell down and gave up the ghost,—and he was carried out and buried.” His wife coming in, and not knowing what had happened ; being interrogated by Peter, and convicted of falsehood, and being informed of the sudden death of her husband,

she also “fell down straightway and yielded up the ghost, and was carried forth and buried by her husband.”

But what became of their immortal souls? Modern divines, and public teachers, would tell you at once, without hesitation, that they both went immediately to hell, to suffer the punishment of their guilt, in a future and eternal state. But Peter, who doubtless knew as much about it as any preachers or doctors of divinity have since, and who was as faithful and fearless in declaring the truth, especially those portions of it which are most important, and most salutary in their effects,—*he* says not a word about the future destiny of these two persons. They had been suddenly struck down dead, under his examination, and his severe reprimand. But he pursues them no further,—tells of no torments—intimates no sufferings that awaited them beyond the grave. Why did he not do it? Never was there an occasion—never were there circumstances more suitable or better adapted to such a display. Why did he not portray, in vivid colors, and in all their appalling reality, the terrors of that eternal state, into which Ananias and Sapphira had been so suddenly and fearfully ushered? The only reason that can consistently be given is, that he knew of no such terrors. He had not learned the doctrine of divine wrath and vengeance in a future state, from that meek and heaven-sent Master, with whom he had been associated—by whom he had been instructed in the doctrine of “the restitution of all things, spoken by the mouth of all God’s holy prophets, since the world began”—and of whom he had imbibed the *truth*, and the *spirit* of that gospel, which hath brought life and immortality to light.

I will cite the account of the death of one more wicked man, as described in the New Testament, which will close our examination and our remarks upon this particular point. It is that of the cruel and infamous *King Herod*. The description is given in the 12th chapter of Acts. In the beginning of the chapter, the historian, St. Luke, says, "Now about that time, Herod the King, stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church, and he killed James the brother of John with the sword: and because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also; and when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers; intending, after Easter, to bring him forth to the people." Peter, however, by a miraculous interference, was delivered from the prison, to the great joy of the church, and the disappointment of Herod,—who immediately ordered the keepers to be put to death. These circumstances sufficiently indicate the vile character of this cruel and impious King.

The historian proceeds to state that "upon a set day, Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a God, and not of a man: and immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory; and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost." Dr. Clarke supposes he was suddenly seized with a violent inflammation of the bowels, which, he says, after five days excruciating torments, (according to Josephus) terminated in death by putrefaction; and he says, moreover, "his death was most evidently a judgment from God."

But what does the inspired evangelical historian say of him further? Does he intimate any thing concerning his condition beyond the present life?—any sufferings that awaited him after the pains of death, and the close of his mortal existence? No; not a word: He says, he “gave up the ghost,”—that is, he *died*, and that is all—yet a more appropriate case could scarcely be presented, in which to have described the miseries of a departed spirit, if such miseries are reserved to a future state. We have now done citing instances from the scriptures relative to this point; and because it is an important and very interesting one, and is fairly within the scope of our subject, we have been particular, and taken considerable time in its examination. The result is, that setting aside the case of the rich man, in the passage we are illustrating, there appears to be no instance stated in the scriptures, in which it is said, or intimated, concerning any wicked man, that at, or after his death, he *went to*, or *awoke up in*, a place or state of torment.

But is it not best, and safest, so to consider it?—and will it not have a salutary influence on the living, to have it taught and believed that the wicked, at death, go to a place of punishment in a future state? Yes, my friends, it is best, in all respects, so to understand and believe and teach, if there is any just foundation for it. Otherwise it is *not*, unless it is better to believe fiction than reality; and to teach falsehood, rather than truth. We have no occasion to be frightened with *imaginary* evils and terrors, and no authority or permission to alarm *others* by them. The *truth*, as revealed, is sufficient, and is the best, and will have the best influence. If the wicked at death, go to a state of punishment and misery in another world, is it not reasonable to expect

that some account, or some intimation would have been given of it, in some of the particular descriptions that are given of the deaths of wicked men in the bible?

I have examined the scriptures very particularly, and with a direct reference to this point. Indeed, it is virtually admitted by those whose views are in opposition to ours upon this subject, that the case of the rich man, is the only one of the kind in the bible. And hence, when they would set forth the terrors of a future state, and the sufferings of the wicked after death, they always refer, for an example, to the rich man, "lifting up his eyes in hell, being in torments."

I appeal to your candor, my hearers, to say, is it not wonderful? is it not most unaccountable, that this should be the only instance noted in the sacred records?—An instance too, in the case of a person, not charged with a single crime, nor with the omission of any duty; whilst the death of many others, notorious for their wickedness, is very particularly described, and not a word said, or a suggestion made, as to any sufferings to which they were doomed, or which awaited them in another state of being.

These are facts and circumstances, which, although they do not determine the true meaning of the passage under discussion, are yet sufficient, we think, at least to excite a doubt, and even to render it very improbable, that the exposition which has been commonly given of it, is the true one.

Do you doubt the correctness of our statement in this particular? Then examine the bible yourselves, carefully, in reference to this point. Travel, in your researches, through the records of the Old and New Testaments. Mark the description given of every case.

You will read, in a number of instances, of *large bodies* of human beings swept away from the land of the living, as it were in a moment, and in the midst of their follies and their wickedness. And you will also read of *individuals*, of most abominable characters, being cut off in their thoughtless and ungodly career of crime and guilt. But will you read too of their lifting up their eyes in hell, being in torments? or of any sufferings which awaited them in another state of being beyond the bounds of mortality? We are persuaded you will learn nothing of the kind by such an examination. No, not in one instance, unless it be that of the rich man, in the passage under investigation.

And if so, does it not suggest the idea, as more than possible; nay, is not the inference almost irresistible, that the account of this man, his riches, his apparel, his sumptuous fare, his death, and his after punishment,—that the *whole* description is not to be understood *literally*—but as a figurative, and parabolical representation of events and dispensations belonging to the *present* state of mankind upon earth; and which were to have their accomplishment in due time, in *this* world. This is our decided and deliberate opinion of the meaning and design of this parable; and we do humbly expect that the illustration we are attempting to give, ere it be concluded, will show, very conclusively, that this is the only rational and consistent view that can be taken of it.

In our next lecture we shall take up the word *hell*, in the passage, notice its derivation, together with the ancient, and modern understanding of it, and the use and application which has been very generally made of it by the clergy and others. We shall also, in

the next lecture, if we have room, notice the application made by the rich man to father Abraham, for relief and assistance, together with the answer returned by the sainted Patriarch: all which will go to show, we think, most conclusively, that the passage, in its true meaning, does not describe the situation of an individual, or of any portion of mankind in a future state of existence, and gives no support to the doctrine of eternal torments.

Here then, to employ the language of a heathen writer, which in this case accords with the decisions both of reason and revelation—" *Here* will we hold.— If there is a power above us—and that there is, all nature cries aloud, through all her works,—He must delight in virtue, and what He delights in must be happy." And we will add, what He delights in, will be ultimately established, throughout the whole extent of his moral government, and consequently *vice and misery cannot be eternal.* Amen.

LECTURE III.

LUKE xvi. 31.

'If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.'

IT will be recollected, by those who attended our last lecture, that we promised in our next to consider, particularly, the word *hell*, as it is employed in the parable we are attempting to illustrate. To this we now proceed.

It is scarcely necessary to remind you, my hearers, that the greater part of preachers and writers upon the subject of revealed religion, have taken for granted, (what, indeed, ought rather to be proved) that there is a place of future punishment beyond this world; and that the name of that place is, in our language, *hell*. They have not, we believe, attempted to describe its location or its limits, nor the time when it was made. It is certain that Moses, in his description of the creation, gives no account of it. Yet, if there is such a place, it must have been made, or, to use another scripture term, *built*, at some period or other. For, says the apostle, "he that built all things, is God."

But, as before remarked, it is generally assumed for a fact, that there is such a place of punishment, and that the name of it is *hell*; and hence, when the word is used by preachers generally, the hearers are at no

loss to understand their meaning ; they know they refer to a future state of existence, in misery and woe. Whether this is the scriptural meaning of the word hell or not, is worthy of serious and careful inquiry.

It may be proper to remark, in this place, that the Hebrew word, which in our English bible is often translated hell, is *sheol*. It is said to be found in the Old Testament, in sixty-four places ; in three of those it is rendered *pit* ; in twenty-nine places, *grave*, and in thirty-two places it is rendered *hell*. But it is believed, that, on due examination, it will be found that in no instance does it mean a place of punishment or suffering in a future state. Nor is this merely the opinion of *Universalists*. The best writers of other sects have asserted the same. Doctor Campbell, the learned Scotch Presbyterian, who is allowed to have been one of the greatest biblical critics, says, in one of his Dissertations—“*sheol* signifies the state of the dead in general, without regard to the goodness or badness of the persons, their happiness or misery.” To the same purpose is the language of Dr. Whitby, the celebrated Episcopal divine, “All men, (says he,) go to *sheol*” (or *hades*.) There Jacob, and Job, and David, and Hezekiah expected, and even desired to be.”

But it is unnecessary to refer to the opinion of any uninspired writers upon the subject. No one can read the passages in the Old Testament, where this word occurs, without being shocked at the idea of its designating a place of torment in a future state. Permit me to cite a few texts as examples.

The patriarch Jacob, when, by the deception of his sons, he was led to believe that his beloved *Joseph*

had been devoured by a wild beast, declared, in the anguish of his heart, "I will go down to *sheol*"—that is, to give it the common rendering, "I will go down to *hell* to my son mourning." And when they urged him to send his youngest son Benjamin into Egypt with them, he told them, "if mischief should befall him in the way, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to *hell*"—that is, to *sheol*,—here translated *grave*, though more frequently rendered *hell*. But if it had been so rendered here, as it is in other places, it would have represented Joseph as being in *hell*, and that his father Jacob expected soon to follow him to the same place. It would also represent Job as praying—"O that thou wouldst hide me in *hell*;" and David as saying, "My life draweth nigh unto *hell*." "Let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in *hell*;" and again, "Our bones," says he "are scattered at *hell's* mouth, as when one cutteth and cleaveth wood." Now, does any one believe (as Balfour asks in reference to this text) that people's bones are scattered at the mouth of *hell*, meaning a place of eternal misery?

Again, we may observe further, in relation to this point, that the same word, *sheol*, is, in a number of places, translated *hell*, in our English bible, in a connection which shows its meaning to be very different from what is now understood by it. We will name but an instance or two. David says, in the language of gratitude to God, "for great is thy mercy towards me; and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest *hell*." Was David in the place of eternal misery? Certainly not, for he was *delivered* from the lowest *hell*. Jonah says,—“Out of the belly of *hell* cried I,

and thou heardst my voice." Are prayers thought to be of any avail in hell? We are told they are not, and never will be. But Jonah was in hell, and there he prayed, there he was heard, and he was delivered from it. And when David prayed in reference to certain persons, that they might "go down quick into hell," are we to understand that he desired they might be quickly sent into a place of endless torment? Surely, no one will claim that such was the prayer of the man after God's own heart.

But it is unnecessary to dwell upon the usage or meaning of the word *sheol*, or hell, as it is found in the Old Testament; for there is not a single instance of its occurrence there, in which, even an orthodox preacher or writer, who has ever taken pains to examine the subject, and who regards his reputation for correctness, will claim that it means a place of future misery beyond this world.

But what is the derivation, and the meaning of the word hell, as it occurs in the New Testament, and particularly in the passage under examination?

There are four words in the original languages of the bible, which are all translated *hell*, in our common English version. These are *sheol*, *hades*, *tartarus*, and *gehenna*. The first of these is the Hebrew word, which we have just been considering. The second is the Greek word corresponding to it. And this is the word which is translated hell in the parable, or "story," we are illustrating. The word *hades*, in the Greek of the New Testament, answers to *sheol* of the Hebrew, in the Old Testament; and it is universally agreed that their original meaning is the same. *Hades* is found in eleven places in the New Testa-

ment, and no more ; and it is translated in English, by the word *hell*, in all those places but *one*, where it is rendered *grave*.

Do you wish to know what passage it is in the New Testament in which this word is rendered *grave* ? It is the noted text in 1 Cor. 15th, 55th. “ O *grave*, where is thy victory.” Now let it be particularly remarked, that *grave*, in this passage, is a translation from the very same original word, which, in every other place in the New Testament, is rendered *hell*. Why was it not so rendered in this passage ? We can imagine no other reason, than that the translators might think it would seem like a contradiction of the doctrine of future endless punishment. To have given the word the same translation in the present case, would make the passage read as follows—“ O death ! where is thy sting ? O *hell* ! where is thy victory !” It should be noted that this is a quotation by St. Paul, from the book of Hosea, 13th chapter, and 14th verse, where the word *sheol* occurs twice, and is translated by the English word *grave*, but might, with equal propriety, have been rendered *hell* ; and then the original passage, quoted in substance by St. Paul, would have read thus—“ I will ransom them from the power of *hell* ; I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be thy plagues ; O *hell*, I will be thy destruction.” In reference to this prophetic declaration, the Apostle, putting it in the form of an interrogation, triumphantly asks—O death, where is thy sting ? O *hell*, where is thy victory ? The answer is, It will be no where, for it is to be *destroyed* ; consequently, it is not a place of everlasting punishment and misery.

I have before quoted Dr. Campbell, and given his

opinion of the Hebrew word *sheol*. Concerning the Greek word *hades*, he says, "It occurs in eleven places in the New Testament. In my judgment, it ought never in scripture to be rendered *hell*, at least in the sense wherein that word is now universally understood by Christians." Dr. Whitby says of *hades*,—"It is the place to which the good as well as the bad go;" that it signifies, "not the place of punishment, but the *grave*, or the place of death." These are two of the most celebrated writers and critics, one a Scotch Presbyterian, the other an English Episcopalian; and they both agree that *hades*, rendered *hell*, in the New Testament, does not mean a place of punishment or suffering, but the place or state of the dead in general, without regard to the goodness or badness of their characters.

Doctor Adam Clarke, the learned Methodist commentator, in his remarks upon Matthew ii. 23, says—"The word *hell*, used in the common translation, conveys *now* an *improper* meaning of the original word, because *hell* is only (now) used to signify the place of the *darned*."

To be sure, these writers and others have attempted to make out that this *hades* or *hell*, is divided into two separate apartments; one called *tartarus*, or a place of punishment for the wicked, and the other *elysium*, or a place of happiness for the righteous. But of this division of *hades*, or *hell*, into two apartments, called *tartarus* and *elysium*, the scriptures give no account, and furnish no authority for it; and the opinion has no other foundation than that of *heathen fable*.

Now, before we proceed any further in relation to

the case of the rich man in the passage under examination, there are some things which I wish may be particularly noted.

In the first place, we remark that the original Greek word, which is rendered *hell* in the passage, and in which the rich man is said to have lifted up his eyes, being in torments, is *hades*. There is another word which occurs just twelve times in the New Testament, and is always translated *hell* in our English version. It is *gehenna*. This word, orthodox writers and commentators contend, always designates the place of endless punishment and suffering in a future state; and they admit that it is the *only* word which does describe, or refer to such a place. This word we shall not at present attempt to define or illustrate. Our business is with the meaning of the word *hell*, as derived from the original Greek word *hades*. For, let it be borne in mind, that the rich man is not represented as being in *gehenna*, but in *hades*. Not in a place of punishment in a future state, for *hades*, it is admitted, did not, in its original signification, mean such a place; but the place or state of the dead in general, without regard to their characters, whether good or bad. Christ went into *hades*, or *hell*; yet no one supposes he went to a place of punishment or suffering. The Psalmist says,—and it is quoted in the New Testament, in reference to Christ—“Thou wilt not leave my soul in *hell*, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption.”

You would doubtless think *that* preacher very uncharitable and presumptuous, who should, from the pulpit, declare to his congregation, that he verily believed they would every one of them go to *hell*; and,

especially, you would think it most inconsistent and outrageous for a *Universalist* preacher to make such a declaration. But he might do it with strict propriety. And I have no hesitation in saying this evening to this numerous congregation, that I am fully persuaded you are every one of you bound for *hell*; you are on your way, and will certainly arrive there. Not to a place of *torment* in another world,—God forbid—but to the *grave*—to *hades*—the state of the dead. “All men go to *hades*,” that is, as the word is translated, all men go to *hell*.

But it is said the meaning of the word has become changed from its original signification. It would appear as if a great many, and indeed most preachers are of this opinion, for they now constantly quote passages in which the word *hell* is derived from *sheol* in the Old Testament, and from *hades* in the new, and apply it to a place or state of endless punishment after death; and yet, if they have taken pains to inform themselves upon this point, they must know that such is not the original meaning of either of those words.

And now, my friends, we would inquire,—if the meaning of those words have become changed, who changed their meaning? We desire to know who has had any authority to change them from their original signification, when they were spoken or communicated by divine inspiration?

This is a serious and very interesting question. It is an acknowledged fact, that those words—*sheol* and *hades*—both of which are most commonly translated *hell*, did not originally signify a place of suffering in a future state. Writers of the greatest learning and celebrity have acknowledged it, and say that they

ought not to have been rendered hell, as that word is now commonly understood. By what authority, then, we ask again, has the original meaning of those words been altered? And with what propriety are passages of scripture containing either of those words, quoted and applied as proofs of the doctrine of endless sufferings in a future state? This is certainly perverting the scriptures from their acknowledged original sense, to one of merely human authority, and the unsupported imaginations of men. It is making many passages of scripture convey a meaning which the sacred writers never intended, and on a subject of the greatest interest and importance.

I must beg leave to make a quotation here from a late writer upon this particular point.* He says—“ Since neither sheol, nor hades, nor even the word hell, in English, *originally* signified a place of endless misery, is it not a perversion of the divine oracles, to quote any of the texts in which those words occur, to prove it? It is well known that such texts are often quoted for this purpose; but, is it not, (says he) a very great imposition upon the ignorant, to quote such texts in proof of this doctrine? The simple, honest hearted, English reader of his bible, sees the word *hell* often used by the sacred writers. He has been taught from a child, that hell means a place of endless misery for the wicked. Every book he reads, every sermon he hears, all tend to deepen his early impressions, and confirm his opinion. Those who *know* better, are not much disposed to undeceive him. On the one hand, they are, perhaps, deterred from it by a false fear of disturbing public opinion; and on

* Walter Balfour.

the other, by reluctance to encounter the odium of the Christian public, in being looked upon as heretics.

“Select the most celebrated preacher you can find, and let him frankly tell his audience, that neither *sheol*, nor *hades*, nor even our word *hell*, originally meant a place of endless misery, and his celebrity is at an end. He would from that moment be considered as an heretic; and his former admirers would now be his warm opposers.” My hearers, I cannot help requesting you to reflect seriously upon this matter.

Now it is a fact, the truth of which you can easily ascertain to your satisfaction, that the most celebrated writers in the Presbyterian and Episcopal Churches,—together with Doct. Adam Clarke, of the Methodist Church, have all acknowledged, that the word *hell*, as it occurs in the scriptures, and as translated from the words *sheol* and *hades* of the Hebrew and Greek, did not originally mean a place of punishment in another world, and that they are improperly rendered *hell*, according to the common meaning now attached to that word.

Well now, suppose a minister of one of the above named denominations—for example, a preacher of the Methodist order,—should be preaching upon the passage in Psalms, “The wicked shall be turned into *hell*,” &c. And suppose, in the midst of his discourse, while setting forth the inconceivable sufferings to which mankind are liable in a future state of existence, he should make a sudden pause, and then go on to remark as follows—“My dear hearers, I feel myself bound in duty to state to you, that the word rendered *hell*, in my text, is translated from the original Hebrew word *sheol*, a word which, as used by the sacred

writers, had no reference to a place of punishment beyond the present life ; it only meant the grave, or the state of the dead in general, but intimated nothing in relation to their future existence." Or, suppose his text should be from the *New Testament*, as follows—“In hell he lifted up his eyes,”—or—“Thou Capernaum that art exalted to heaven, shall be thrust down to hell,” &c., and should proceed to say, in his illustration—“I must honestly inform you, my hearers, that the word here translated hell, is from the Greek word *hades*, answering to the Hebrew word *sheol*, in the Old Testament ; and *neither* of them, in their original signification, described, or had any reference to a place or state of punishment for the souls of men in another world : this meaning has since been given to those words by preachers, and uninspired men, but it was not the meaning intended to be conveyed by the inspired writers, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

What would be thought of a preacher who should make this honest statement ?—a statement undeniably correct, which no one who has any claims to biblical knowledge will pretend to dispute. Why, his congregation would be greatly alarmed, pronounce him a universalist, and, probably more than half of them would determine they would never hear him again. Yes ; and he would be forthwith presented to the higher ecclesiastical powers, to be tried for heresy.

Now my hearers, I have stated this easily supposed case, that in it you may discover the power of human tradition, the force of prejudice, and the influence of popular opinion.

I must still quote again from the afore-cited writer

(Balfour) upon this same point. He says—"I ask again, and I solemnly put it to every man's conscience, who professes to fear God,—Ought not men to be honestly told the truth about this, let the consequences be what they may? Are we at liberty to pervert the scriptures in favor of any sect, or system in the world? Must we be guilty of a pious *fraud*, in concealing from people what they ought to know, because the disclosure may excite popular prejudices against ourselves, and afford cause of suspicion that the doctrine of endless misery is not true?"—The writer adds concerning hades,—that "we never find the words *eternal*, *everlasting*, or *forever*, used in connexion with it. We never read of an *everlasting* or *eternal* Hades or Hell, or that men are to be punished in it forever. Nothing like this is to be found in scripture. Such epithets, added to the word hell, found in books and sermons, are among the improvements in divinity which man's wisdom teacheth. The word *hell* is first perverted from its original signification, and then the word *eternal* is added to it, to make the punishment of endless duration."

You cannot help seeing the propriety of my dwelling at considerable length upon the word hades, in the passage under consideration, because it is particularly necessary to ascertain the true meaning of this word, in order to a right understanding of the other parts of the passage which are immediately connected with it. Its being translated from the Greek language, into our own, makes no alteration in its meaning. The true signification of the word *hell* must be the same as that of *hades*, of which it is the translation.

We have seen that the original Greek word hades,

did not signify a place of future endless punishment and misery—it conveyed no such idea; as admitted by the learned of all denominations. Surely then, when translated into our language, or any other, the original meaning ought to be retained, and no other meaning should be attached to it; for who has any right to alter the language of inspiration? whoever does so is justly chargeable with perverting the scriptures.

A query may here be suggested:—When it is said that the rich man lifted up his eyes in hades, or hell, are we to understand that he lifted up his eyes in the grave, or the place or state of the dead? We answer, no; not *literally*, according to the common acceptance of those terms; but in a *parabical*, or figurative sense. And accordingly we find that people are spoken of in the scriptures, as being dead, and in their graves, while yet they are living on the earth. But the terms employed in such cases are to be understood as figurative and symbolical—as representing the particular condition, character, and circumstances of persons, or of a people in the present life. And *this*, we expect to show in due season, is the design of the passage we are illustrating. Our object, as yet, has been to show that the commonly received opinion of the meaning of this portion of scripture, and the application which has generally been made of it, is totally incorrect, and cannot be sustained.

And now, my respected hearers, if any of you have any doubts as to the correctness of observations we have here made upon the meaning of the word *hell*, translated from the original word hades, it would be very satisfactory to me, and doubtless to you also, if you would consult the clergy of other sects upon this

matter. There are in this city several ministers of different religious denominations, of distinguished learning and competent information; and who, if seriously inquired of, would, we ought to presume, candidly give you their opinion, as the result of their researches upon this point. And we have no fears that any one of them will contradict, in any essential particular, the statements and remarks we have made relative to this important word, or that they would risk their reputation, as scholars and theologians, on a different interpretation.

There is a remarkable circumstance which I wish to notice in relation to this account of the rich man. It is this. The apostles were the companions of our Saviour, in his travels and his teaching. What he delivered to the multitudes, in parables, he fully explained to them; so that, as he says—to *them* it was given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, or gospel revelation; and particular charge was given them, that what they heard in the ear, in secret, they should publish upon the house-top—that is, openly and plainly.

They were with our Saviour when he delivered this parable or account concerning the rich man and the beggar. We may suppose they understood his meaning, or if they did not immediately comprehend it, he doubtless afterwards explained it to them, according to his usual custom.

Now, if in this parable or discourse, he meant to give a representation of the future state of the righteous and the wicked, after the death of the body, and to illustrate and enforce the important doctrine by two opposite examples, the apostles, no doubt, so understood

him, or had it so explained to them. And if the description of the rich man's dying, and lifting up his eyes in hell, being in torments, was a real statement of facts, and exhibited as a warning to others, not only his condition, but that of all wicked men in another world, is it not utterly unaccountable that the apostles should never afterwards, in all their preaching or writings, once mention it, or allude to it in any way?

The apostles preached to all sorts of people; they admonished the wicked,—they forewarned them of the divine judgments,—they called upon them to repent and be converted, that their sins might be blotted out. But they never threatened them with punishment in hades. They never apprized them that after death they would lift up their eyes in hell, being in torments. St. James, in his Epistle, addresses himself to *rich* men in particular; tells them to weep and howl for the miseries that should come upon them.—“Your riches (says he) are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten; your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days,” &c. What an opportunity was here to have referred to the case of the rich man in our subject, and to the flames of hades or hell, in which he was tormented. Yet he never adverts to him, as a warning to the wicked rich men, whom he was so severely reproofing. Do you think, my hearers, that most of our preachers in the present day, if they were addressing such characters as James describes in the passage just cited, would forget, or neglect to refer to the parable of the rich man and Lazarus? would they not describe with alarming pathos, the fearful horrors of the rich

man's doom, lifting his despairing eyes in torments, and pleading in vain, for a single drop of water to cool his tongue, and mitigate his intolerable sufferings?

How often have you heard preachers refer to this case. Do they not, in fact, almost invariably recur to it in describing the condition of the *finally impenitent*, as the common phrase is, in a future state? you will bear me witness that this is the fact. How then can it be accounted for, that the apostles have never, in a single instance, either in their preaching or writings, that we have any account of, mentioned, or referred to this case of the rich man? It is the only instance in the bible, as we noticed in the last lecture, in which it is said, or intimated concerning any wicked man, that at his death, or after his death, he went to a place of misery, or lifted up his eyes in torments. And yet the apostles never once mentioned it, nor alluded to it.

I know not how others may account for the conduct of the apostles, in reference to this case; I confess myself unable to do it in any other way than this—namely, that they did not understand this parable or account concerning the rich man, as intended by our Lord, to teach the doctrine of punishment and misery in another world.

But it will be said, that this man is represented as being in *torment*, and this must mean, and must have been intended to teach *something*. Doubtless, my hearers, it has a meaning, and an important one. It was intended to teach, and confirm a most interesting truth. What it was, we hope to be able to show clearly and satisfactorily, before we finish our illustration of the subject. But we are yet on what we may call

the *negative* side of it, or attempting to show what *cannot* be its meaning and intention.

Before closing this lecture I wish to make a remark or two further concerning the word hell, as derived from the original words, sheol and hades. We have before observed that the latter of these words answers to the former, and that they both convey the same meaning. To this, theological writers of all denominations agree. Dr. Campbell says, "The word *hell*, in its primitive signification, perfectly corresponded with the word *hades*." "And," says he, "at first, it denoted only what was *secret* or *concealed*." Its most common meaning, in the scriptures, is, the grave or the state of the dead.

Dr. Whitby, the Episcopal writer says, expressly, it does not signify the place of punishment. He says, further, "Those *heathens* who looked upon it as the receptacle of *souls*, held it to be a place in which they would be *punished* or *rewarded*." Now, my hearers, what is this but a plain acknowledgement, that punishment and misery in *hell*, is a *heathen* notion, which the inspired writers never taught? They never intended any such thing, by the word sheol or hades, rendered hell. It appears then that it is not a scripture doctrine; but was derived from the *heathens*; and it corresponds well with their ideas of cruel and revengeful deities.

But I would further remark, that although the word hell most commonly means the *grave*, or the state of the dead in general; yet this is not always the meaning of the word in scripture. It is sometimes used figuratively, to denote a state of great affliction, anxiety and trouble.

Hence David says—"The pains of *hell* gat hold

upon me,"—and he explains it by saying—"I found trouble and sorrow." But by God's merciful providence he was delivered out of this state, and what does he call it?—how does he describe it?—why, he employs the word *hell*, with a superlative attached to it. "For great is thy mercy towards me : and thou hast delivered my soul from the *lowest hell*." Not from the place of endless misery—our opposers would not agree to that ;—and it was not from the *grave*, or the state of the dead—for he was still living upon earth. But he employs the word *hell* in a figurative sense, to denote great affliction, anxiety and trouble—for it was from these he was delivered. Other instances of its similar use could be cited. And we expect it will appear that the *hell* in which the rich man, in our subject, is said to be in torments, is to be understood figuratively, and as a parabolical representation.

We mentioned in our last lecture, that if time permitted, we should in this, notice the application of the rich man to Father Abraham, together with the patriarch's reply ; but I have detained you sufficiently long already.

And to conclude, my hearers, what can be more important, or of deeper interest, than the point which we have labored to investigate and ascertain this evening,—namely, whether there be a *hell* of torments beyond the grave, awaiting any portion of the human race ? If there is, your preacher, or some of his congregation, may be condemned to suffer those torments. If there be no such *hell*, and we can be satisfied of it as a truth, what effect do you think it would have upon you ? Would you be more disposed to rise in rebellion against your Maker, blaspheme his

name, and trample his laws under your feet? No; I know you would not. But a view of God's infinite mercy and love, would disarm you of all your enmity, if you have any,—would fill you with emotions of the most sincere and lively gratitude. Amen.

LECTURE IV.

LUKE xvi. 31.

“ If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.”

IN our last lecture upon the subject of the rich man and Lazarus, we inquired particularly into the derivation, and the original meaning of the word *hell*, in which the rich man is said to have lifted up his eyes; and showed, we trust, satisfactorily and conclusively, that the sacred writers in using the word, never intended to convey the idea of a place of punishment and misery in a future state of existence. And if so, then it is clear that the opinion, however popular it may have become, can be traced to no higher authority than the invention and tradition of men. And as we proceed in noticing what has been the common opinion of the meaning and design of this parable, the incorrectness of the popular construction given to the word *hell*, will, we think, be more and more apparent.

We come now to notice the petition or prayer of the rich man to father Abraham, with the patriarch's answer.—“ He lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom: and he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me,” &c. We have before remarked upon the

circumstance of Lazarus being represented as in the bosom of Abraham. But here are some other particulars which deserve to be noticed. In the first place, He *saw* Abraham with Lazarus in his bosom: and although it is said to be afar off, yet it is evident that taking the account together, the phrase *afar off* must not be understood as signifying in reality a great distance. I might illustrate this by another statement which you will all recollect. It occurs in the parable of the prodigal son; in which it is said the father saw his son while he was yet *a great way off*. But he was not so far but that his father could see him, and could very soon run to him, as we learn he did.

So Abraham was not so far from the rich man, as to be out of his sight. And furthermore, they are represented as holding conversation together; which shows that, strictly speaking, and regarding the account as a description of real facts and occurrences, there could not be a great distance between them. They were, to speak familiarly, near neighbors.

And here I cannot help noticing a great discrepancy between the different descriptions that are often given of heaven and hell. Considering them both as local habitations, they are sometimes represented as being very far separated, and at a great distance from each other. Hence the common remark—"As far apart, as heaven is from hell." The Psalmist, if his language is to be understood literally, seems to countenance this idea. Thus, when declaring the divine omnipresence, he represents the Creator as always equally present in places the most remote from each other. "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into *heaven*, thou art

there ; if I make my bed in *hell*, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea ; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." To the same purpose speaks Job. "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is *high as heaven* ; what canst thou do? *deeper than hell* ; what canst thou know." These passages represent heaven as located very high above us ; and hell as an unfathomable depth below. But who does not at once see that such language is highly metaphorical.

Yet it is probably in a great measure from such descriptions, that the vulgar opinion has obtained, of the local situation of heaven and hell ; and hence the common idea, that at death the souls of the righteous ascend literally to an elevated and lofty region, "above the skies," as it is termed ; and that the wicked are driven, and banished far away from the presence of God, down to the dark abode of eternal death, of never-ending woe and horror.

At other times, preachers and writers give a very different description, and represent the two places, heaven and hell, as being in the same vicinity, and very near together, so near, as not only to be in sight of each other, but that the inhabitants can converse one with the other, and observe distinctly what passes, or is transacted in either place. Accordingly it has been often stated, that the glorified saints in heaven will behold the agonizing tortures, and hear the despairing cries and groans of the wretched sufferers in hell ; yes, even those of their former fond associates, and dearest relatives upon earth, without exciting in them the least

pity or regret. Nay; so far from producing any unpleasant sensations, it has often been declared from the pulpit, that the very sight of those sufferings and undying torments will fill all heaven with rapture—with one continued thrill of inexpressible delight!

God of heaven! are these the joys of thy right hand? where there is pleasure forevermore! Is this the blessedness of the heavenly state? and are these some of the ingredients which mingle in and fill to the brim, the cup of immortal felicity!! My soul, come not thou into their secret! Unto their assembly, mine honor, be not thou united!—such, worse than savage joy, would degrade a Nero, a Caligula, or a Herod, here upon earth!

On the other hand, it has been represented that the continual view of the bliss of the saints in heaven, will forever augment the sufferings of the lost, and overwhelm them in eternal despair and anguish. And now let it be remarked, and I think it cannot be doubted, that both these views or opinions of the immortal state have been chiefly derived from the parable, or story, of the rich man and Lazarus.

Dr. Adam Clarke evidently considers the account given of these two men, as furnishing authority and support to this opinion. Speaking of the rich man, he says:—"Scarcely had he entered the place of his punishment, when he lifted up his eyes on high; and what must his surprise be, to *see* himself separated from God, and to *feel* himself tormented in that flame?" Again he says, "He sees Lazarus clothed with glory and immortality; this is the *first* circumstance in his punishment. What a contrast! what a *desire* does he feel to resemble him; and what rage and despair

because he is not like him ! ” It is clearly the Doctor’s opinion that the Almighty Creator will place some of his own creatures in a situation in which they shall have a full prospect of the heavenly state, on purpose to *torment* them, by having continually before their eyes the happiness which others are enjoying, but which he determines shall never be theirs !

My hearers, can you imagine a disposition more cruel or more malignant than this ? and this disposition is imputed to the Father of mercies ! But I must quote this learned commentator a little further. He says, “ We may safely conclude, that the view which damned souls have in the gulf of perdition, of the happiness of the blessed, from which they are eternally excluded, will form no mean part of the punishment of the lost.” Furthermore, he says, “ An eternal desire to escape from evil, and an eternal desire to be united with the Supreme Good, the gratification of which is forever impossible, must make a *second* circumstance in the misery of the lost.”

We are surprised at this statement of the commentator, because it is so different from the representations that have commonly been made upon this subject. Those who have undertaken to give a particular and graphic description of hell torments, (and many have undertaken it,) have stated, with strong emphasis, that the vile and miserably degraded tenants of those infernal regions are filled with rage and malice, and with utter hatred and enmity towards God and all goodness. That they possess not one good desire or emotion : that if they were in *heaven*, they would desire to be delivered from it as quick as possible : that they would there be

completely wretched; and that *heaven* would be to them the most intolerable *hell*.

My brethren, have you not often heard such descriptions and declarations as these? Yet the commentator, Dr. Clarke, represents "the damned in hell," as viewing the happiness of the blessed, and deeply regretting their exclusion from it; and as possessing "an eternal desire to be united with the Supreme Good; the gratification of which is forever impossible." And this he says "must make a *second* circumstance in the misery of the lost." Such are some of the inconsistencies which always attend any system, especially any system of religious doctrines or speculations, founded upon erroneous principles.

But here is a remarkable thing! The above-named commentator skips over the next verse in this parable, and says not a word upon it: and yet it would seem to be as important as any other part. It is the 24th verse, and contains the *prayer* of the rich man in hell. If we should do so, what would you say of it? Why, you would say, and certainly with good reason, that the preacher discovered difficulties in that verse, which he chose not to encounter.

It does, we think, present difficulties; but they are on the side of our opposers, as will be evident on examination. The rich man is here represented as praying, and praying most sincerely and fervently. And if he is to be considered as a just sample of what is common to all others there, then, (pardon me, my hearers, the subject is a serious one, and I have no disposition to trifle with it,) then, I say it would appear that hell itself, in the common understanding of it, as a place of torment, is also a place of *prayer*.

Yes, it is as it were, one *continuous* prayer-meeting; and to be *protracted* to all eternity.—And the prayers offered there, are also most sincere and ardent. The prayer of the rich man, as it is represented, has every appearance of being offered in the utmost sincerity, humility, and fervor. He petitioned, he implored, he cried for *mercy!* Was it not a proper prayer for a sinner in distress? Certainly it was. What should he pray for but for mercy?

But can any one believe that the God of mercy, and of infinite compassion, will ever place any of his needy, dependent creatures, in a condition in which they shall be constrained perpetually to cry for mercy in vain?—a condition, in which their Maker will compel them to implore and beg for that mercy, which he determines they shall never obtain? What a character and disposition does such an idea impute to the Deity!—the ever blessed God! Yet according to the common exposition of this parable, such is the necessary and unavoidable inference.

But do the scriptures give account of any other person's praying in hell? Yes, they do. Jonah prayed when he was in the "belly of hell," and David prayed in the lowest hell. But they were both *delivered*, and consequently, it will not be contended that either of them was in a place of punishment in another world.

Before leaving this part of the parable, it is proper to notice, that the prayer or request of the rich man was not offered to *God*, but to *Abraham*.—"He cried, saying, Father *Abraham*, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus," &c. But why should he pray to Abraham? Could he imagine that *that* patriarch had the management and control of things in heaven; and that he

could, if he chose, send a messenger to administer to his relief in a place of endless torment ?

The supposition is altogether unreasonable. Archbishop Tillotson remarks upon this circumstance, that “the petition or request, which the rich man in hell made to Abraham, is the only instance we meet with in scripture, of any thing like a prayer that was put up to any of the saints in heaven.” And this he says by way of objection to the Roman Catholic doctrine of the invocation of glorified saints.

But what was the particular request of the rich man ? It was a remarkable one, such an one as never was made by any person before or since ; at least, the scriptures no where furnish another such instance. The request was, that father Abraham would send *Lazarus* to him. Now we have never understood that there are among the saints in heaven, any such distinctions as those of master and servant. And, therefore, what reason was there to suppose that Abraham could send Lazarus for the purpose desired, any more than that Lazarus should send Abraham ?

But what was Lazarus desired to do, when he should be sent to the rich man in hell ? ‘The request is as follows—“That he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue.” We might here inquire if we are to understand that there is, *literally*, water in heaven, and whether Lazarus was to take some with him from thence ? or whether he would find the water in hell, in which he was to dip the tip of his finger ? and in either case, whether such a service could be expected to afford relief ; or whether it would not rather be an aggravation of the torment which the miserable wretch was suffering in that flame ?

But furthermore ; both the rich man and Lazarus were then *disembodied* spirits. It is not pretended that they went, soul and body, one to heaven and the other to hell. How then is it that the one still has *fingers*, and the other a *tongue*? These are, to be sure, very particular inquiries ; but they naturally arise from the account as it is stated. And I make them for the purpose of showing, that this is *not* a literal account of facts and circumstances ; that no such things ever took place, in relation to two individuals of mankind ; and that the passage is entirely misconstrued and misapplied, when such is declared to be its meaning. The language is entirely *figurative* and *allegorical*. The figures are, doubtless, very significant, and the language has an important meaning. But this must be learned by the *connexion* of the passage, and the *general subject* of the discourse, in which such language is employed ; rather than by the figures, or metaphors themselves that are used in the description. Bishop Tillotson says, “ It is a known rule among all divines, that no certain argument can be drawn from the *circumstances* of a parable, but only from the *main scope* and intention of it.” The scope and intention of the parable under consideration, we expect, will very clearly appear in due time ; but our object is first to go through the whole account, upon the principle which has been commonly assumed, and the construction generally given of it, and notice the difficulties, and utter inconsistencies attending it.

We come to the reply of father Abraham to the petition of the rich man in hades, or hell.

“ And Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise

Lazarus evil things ; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented."

The father of the faithful does not accuse this rich man of any delinquency. He tells him that in his lifetime he enjoyed *good things*. But this he might do very innocently. Is it a duty, or is it commendable, to spurn from us the blessings of Providence, when they are poured in rich profusion upon us? Certainly not. Why are they given, but to be enjoyed? By the favor of a munificent Providence, the holy *Job* was made to "wash his steps in butter, and the rock poured him out rivers of oil." And, by the prophet, the Lord said to his ancient people, the Jews, "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land."

But good things, however enjoyed, whether innocently or otherwise, are liable to be removed from us, and evil things to take their place. The case of *Job* might here again be cited in proof of the truth of this position; but it is unnecessary, for nobody disputes it. So, on the other hand, if troubles and afflictions come upon us, we ought to believe them to be wisely, and even graciously sent; and we are also assured they shall not continue always: for the Lord "keepeth not his anger *forever*, because he delighteth in mercy." Afflictions and calamities may be very severe, but they will not be perpetuated forever. "Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."

There is a constant vicissitude in human affairs, in relation both to individuals and to nations. So the wisdom of providence has ordered it. This is the truth stated by Abraham, in his reply to the rich man. "Son, remember, that thou in thy lifetime receivedst

thy good things ; and likewise Lazarus evil things ; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented."

It is remarkable that the patriarch assigns no reason for the change in the condition of these two persons. He does not tell the rich man that he is now tormented because in his lifetime he was very wicked, a vile, ungodly sinner, and that now he is meeting the just recompense of his crimes and his guilt. Nor does he give the least intimation that Lazarus is now comforted as a reward for his virtues, or because in his lifetime he was pious and good. You often hear such things in sermons, and read them in tracts ; but our Saviour has said nothing of the kind ; the passage expresses no such sentiment. Still, I acknowledge that if this whole account is to be understood literally, as a statement of *facts* concerning two individuals, the language employed forcibly conveys the idea, that a description of their different destinies in a future state, is here intended. But against such an opinion it is believed there are insuperable objections ; several of which have already been stated, and others remain to be noticed ; *all* of which difficulties will, we trust, disappear when the account is considered as a *parable*, and when its true meaning shall be fairly illustrated and understood.

We come now to consider another important circumstance stated in the passage under investigation. It is the *great gulf*, said to be fixed between the two places in which the rich man and Lazarus are represented as being situated, so as to prevent any intercourse between them. "And besides all this (says father Abraham) between us and you there is a great gulf fixed ; so that they which would pass from hence

to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence."

Now you know, my hearers, the two places here referred to, have commonly been understood to be *heaven* and *hell*. But if this be the meaning, the statement in the passage just cited is certainly a very extraordinary one. For, I beg you to notice particularly the *purpose*, for which this great gulf is said to be fixed. How has it been usually explained? Why, that the design of it was, forever to prevent any escape from hell to heaven. And hence you doubtless have often heard preachers state with great emphasis, and as an awful warning to sinners, that if once they should find themselves in hell, there can be no deliverance from it to all eternity; no possibility of escape from thence to heaven; because, say they, there is a great and *impassable gulf* fixed to prevent it. Probably some of this congregation would be greatly surprised, if the preacher should state, or undertake to show, that this great gulf was fixed as much for the purpose of preventing persons from emigrating from heaven to hell, as it was to prevent their emigrating from hell to heaven. But it appears to me, the statement of Abraham fully sustains this opinion, relative to the design of this great gulf. Let us read the passage again, and examine it carefully.

"And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed."—For what purpose, father Abraham, was this great gulf fixed thus between the two places? Listen, my hearers, and the patriarch shall inform us.—"Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that they which would pass *from hence*

to you cannot." Here you see is one object of fixing this gulf; and it is named as the *first* object. Yes, the first object of it was to prevent persons from going from heaven to hell! But the objector will say, it is most unreasonable, and even absurd, to suppose that any one would choose to leave *heaven*, a place of endless joy and happiness, for a *hell* of eternal torments.

We admit that this is a most unreasonable supposition. But then let it be distinctly remembered, that we do not admit that the phrase *Abraham's bosom*, where Lazarus is said to have been carried, means heaven, or the state of immortal happiness in another state of existence; nor that the *hades*, or *hell*, in which the rich man is said to have lifted up his eyes, means a place or state of endless punishment in the eternal world. But let the meaning be what it may, the language plainly supposes that the inhabitants of *both* places might be equally disposed to visit each other; and that this gulf was fixed to prevent any such communication or intercourse.

We would remark a little further concerning this great gulf. Does any one suppose that this is to be understood according to the common signification of the term; i. e. that it is *literally* a gulf, a horrid chasm deep and large, placed between heaven and hell? admitting it to be so, what obstruction could this be to an ethereal or immortal, disembodied spirit, on which the laws of matter have no operation, and no power of control?

Again; if this gulf is to be understood in a literal and local sense, then we have a right, reverently to inquire, what account there is, or whether there is any, when it was made or *fixed*. We have an account of

the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the sea, and of all that pertain to them ; but in that account nothing is said of the creating, or making of either *hell*, or of this *great gulf* ; both of which would seem to be,—according to the common opinion of them,—of sufficient importance to have been particularly mentioned among the works of creation, if they were among them. For we cannot suppose that at the period of the creation, it was then unknown that such places would ever be needed.

Perhaps we dwell more minutely upon these particulars than is really necessary ; for I believe the former general opinion of a local hell, and of literal fire and brimstone, and smoke, and of course of a real, literal *gulf* between heaven and hell, is now pretty much given up ; especially among the learned, and the reflecting and better informed part of Christians. It is time indeed that such ideas were wholly discarded ; together with the notion of infernal demons, witches, and the like,—all of which are relics of superstition, belonging properly to an age of ignorance and barbarism only.

But these superstitions are fast being relinquished ; and although few among the *clergy* have any confidence in them, yet they appear to be willing that the people generally should still retain them, as they seem to be thought necessary to keep the vulgar in awe, restrain them from crime, and make them more devout and pious. Hence, in their preaching, the clergy are careful not to give the least intimation that shall go to discountenance the common opinion of eternal torture in a local hell of real material fire and brimstone, literally

bounded by a tremendous gulf, which separates it from the dominions of heaven.

But perhaps I may seem uncharitable, although I certainly have no desire to be so. I will, therefore, leave you to form the most favorable, and the most charitable opinion you can, from the descriptions you often hear given. One thing is certain; that in the representations of future and eternal sufferings in another world, all those views of *locality*, of *materiality*, and of *literal facts*, must, at least, to appearance, be retained; or else the whole force of the story of the rich man, as respects futurity, will be lost, and the common meaning and application of it must be given up. And instead of its being considered as a statement of facts, relative to individuals in a future state, the whole account must be regarded as a *parable*; a figurative illustration, referring to events and circumstances, in the divine dispensations among mankind in the present life.

I intended to have taken a brief notice of Dr. Clarke's opinion of the meaning of this part of the passage. His language strongly intimates his conviction of the *locality* of hell, somewhere in the immensity of space, though he does not pretend to determine where; and also, that real, literal *fire* and *flame* constitute its elements. He says, "The torments which a soul endures in the hell of fire, will form, through all eternity, a continual present source of indescribable woe." "Actual torment (says he) in the flames of the bottomless pit, forms a *fourth* circumstance in the punishment of the lost. *I am tormented in this flame.*" And then in reference to the great gulf, he says, "The known impossibility of ever escaping from this place

of torment, or to have any alleviation of one's misery in it, forms a *fifth* circumstance in the punishment of ungodly men." He then quotes the declaration, "*between us and you there is a great gulf.*"—And what do you think he makes this great gulf to be? Why, my brethren, as if it was fated, as indeed it is, that error should be inconsistent, he at once leaves the *literal* meaning of the language employed, and considers the term gulf to be a figurative expression, to denote the *divine purpose*. He says, "The eternal purpose of God, formed on the principles of eternal reason, separates the *persons*, and the *places* of abode of the righteous and the wicked, so that there can be no intercourse." He then quotes the passage, with some variation, as follows—"They who wish to pass over hence to you, cannot; neither can they pass over who would come from you hither;" which he paraphrases thus—"A happy spirit cannot go from heaven to alleviate their miseries; nor can any of them escape from the place of their confinement to enter among the blessed. There may be a *discovery* from hell of the paradise of the blessed; but there can be no *intercourse* nor *connexion*."

I am astonished at the views of this commentator! I have seldom seen any thing which to me was more awfully abhorrent. He plainly intimates that the saints in heaven, will fervently *wish* to visit the abode of the damned, in order to alleviate the sorrows and torments of those miserable sufferers; but that Almighty God has inflexibly determined never to suffer them to gratify that benevolent desire; and that *his eternal purpose is the gulf to prevent it!!*

Furthermore, he represents that the wretched ten-

ants of the infernal regions, though confined and secured there, beyond the hope of deliverance, may yet have a *view* of "the paradise of the blessed." For what purpose? Not that they shall ever be permitted to enter there; but eternally to augment the horrors of their own tremendous destiny!—What would such a proceeding among men be called? What but deliberate, calculating atrocity!

Let us suppose a case in point. A tyrant has an utter dislike, an irreconcilable aversion to a certain definite number of persons in his dominions, whom he considered as his inveterate enemies. He knows they are unable to injure him; but they are opposed in heart to his authority and government; and he hates them with a perfect hatred. He knows also that by a display of love and kindness, he could subdue their rebellious spirit, annihilate their enmity, and make them his warm friends and admirers. But he chooses to take a different course. He has them fully in his power, and he determines to wreak his vengeance upon them to the uttermost, and to exert all his power and skill in its infliction. This he does by every painful and agonizing process he can invent. And while the miserable wretches are suffering these *actual* torments, under his vindictive ire, he causes to be placed before them scenes of the most exquisite pleasures and delights—to which, however, they cannot approach; that the amazing contrast may thrill their hearts with keener anguish; whilst their unrelenting sovereign looks on with composure; nay, infinitely *satisfied* that he is able to render them so completely miserable!!

Now what does the commentator say, which goes to support the supposed case above stated, in its applica-

tion to the Almighty? Why he says, in substance, as before quoted, that the Creator will punish a portion, a certain class of his own creatures, in a "hell of fire, in the flames of the bottomless pit, through all eternity." That such will be their "*actual* torment, without any alleviation of their misery, and that their escape from it is rendered impossible by a *great gulf*, which" he says, is "the eternal purpose of God, formed on the principles of eternal reason"!!

And, moreover, to cap the dreadful climax of woe and horror, he says, "Nor can any of them escape from the place of their confinement, to enter among the blessed. There may be a *discovery* from hell of the paradise of the blessed; but there can be no intercourse nor connexion." They can, it seems, have the *sight* of heavenly felicity, but it will be only to aggravate their anguish and deep despair! And be it remembered, all this punishment is represented as to be inflicted upon intelligent beings, by their *Creator*, who created them for his own glory, and who, by a word, by one gracious smile, could subdue their enmity, and make them his loving, obedient, and adoring subjects!

If such a proceeding is not justly denominated *cruelty*, extreme, deliberate cruelty, I know not the meaning of the term, nor in what case it can be fitly applied.

We have dwelt at considerable length upon this part of the subject; for you know, my hearers, what great use has been made of the phrase, the great gulf, and what strong emphasis has been laid upon it. We may have occasion to refer to it again in a future lecture.

The account in the parable or passage goes on to

inform us, that the rich man in hell, obtaining no relief for *himself*, nor any encouragement, offers his next petition in behalf of others, his near family relatives. He still prefers his request to father Abraham; and still entreats him to send the now comforted and happy Lazarus, who formerly "was laid at his gate full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from his table."

"I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house; for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest *they* also come into this place of torment."

We have some remarks to make upon the particular circumstances here stated, but they must be deferred until the next lecture.

If you have hitherto found our attempted illustration of this important subject, in some degree interesting, I hope it will not be less so as we further advance in it, until it shall be completed.

I can not more appropriately close the present lecture than in the devout language of one of the excellent collects in the liturgy of the Episcopal Church.

"Blessed Lord, who hast caused all holy scriptures to be written for our learning; grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them; that by patience and comfort of thy holy word, we may embrace, and ever hold fast, the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ." Amen.

LECTURE V.

LUKE xvi. 31.

“If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”

IN our last lecture we noticed the application made by the rich man in hades, or hell, to father Abraham, entreating him to send Lazarus to afford some relief to him in his torment,—and also the patriarch’s answer. The consideration of these two particulars occupied nearly the whole of the lecture. We just introduced the circumstance of the rich man’s *second* request to the “father of the faithful,” but had not space then for the remarks we wished to make upon it. We purpose to offer them now; and likewise to notice, carefully, Abraham’s second reply.

We shall still consider the subject in the way in which it has been usually explained and applied, stating our objections to such a construction of the passage.

The second earnest supplication of the rich man is expressed as follows: “I pray thee, therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him, (Lazarus) to my father’s house; for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.”

Preachers and commentators appear to have found considerable difficulty in explaining this part of the

“story,” so as to make it consistent with the other parts of it, and with what has been thought to be its general scope and intention. The difficulty arises from this circumstance, namely, that the wicked in hell should feel so much compassion and benevolence towards their fellow-beings, especially their family relatives who are still in this world, that they should be so concerned lest *they* also should come into that place of torment, and so anxious that timely warning should be given them, that they might avoid it.

Such affections and emotions are supposed to be utterly inconsistent with the state of lost souls, in the regions of woe, where sin and guilt, despair and horrid blasphemy prevail forever, without one redeeming quality, or mitigating circumstance. Where the degraded and disgusting wretches are filled only with malignant passions, enmity, spite, and malice; hating God and all goodness, full of rage and revenge towards each other; tormented, and tormenting to all eternity. You are aware, my hearers, that such is the description that has commonly been given of the state and condition of the wretched victims of Almighty wrath and vengeance in the future world.

How is it, then, that the rich man in hell, (supposing it to mean the place of eternal punishment) should be represented as feeling such an intense concern for the safety of his brethren upon earth?—Why, he absolutely appears to feel as much concern and interest for their salvation from the torments of hell, as our pious missionaries and others do for the salvation of the souls of the *heathen*, from the like tremendous destiny; and for any thing we can infer, it was from a principle equally benevolent and disinterested. *They* are very much

afraid the heathen will nearly all go to hell. They represent that their Maker is daily sending them there by thousands; and they are anxious, if possible, to put a stop to it, by sending missionaries to them with the *gospel*, to tell them that God has a better place to which he wishes to take them when they die. Which is in fact telling them that he has been doing that for ages which he had no wish to do, in sending them to a place of torment, for which he never originally designed them; and that it is the bounden duty of Christians to interfere, and prevent this amazing and continued and everlasting destruction of the souls of their fellow-creatures!

Do not say, my hearers, that I am turning a serious subject into ridicule. If the subject has not been already made ridiculous, I am not making it so. I appeal to yourselves, and to your own knowledge, if the statement above made is not literally correct. Are they not the very ideas that have been, and still are constantly inculcated, and pressed upon your consideration and your sympathies, with all possible energy and eloquence. Are we not constantly told that the heathen are *perishing*; that they are continually going to hell in great numbers, and of course, that their Maker is sending them there, and that he will continue to do it, until missionaries shall take the *gospel* to them, to enlighten their minds, and give them better information as to the character of God, his will, and his eternal purpose concerning them?

These remarks can hardly be called a digression from our subject. They are naturally suggested by the circumstance of the rich man in hell desiring that Lazarus should be sent as a messenger or missionary,

to his five brethren, to testify unto them lest they also should come into that place of torment.

But we must still inquire—if according to the common opinion, the hell in which the rich man is said to be tormented, is to be understood as designating the place of future endless punishment—how it should be that *he* should still possess such a benevolent regard for his relatives in this world? Is it not utterly inconsistent with the common descriptions, and the generally received opinion, of the condition of the wicked in a future state? Is there supposed to be any thing like compassion, affection, or benevolence in hell? Is there any principle of pity, or of kindness, operating there?

This will not be admitted. *Why* pleads then the wretched Dives with father Abraham, saying, Send him therefore, send Lazarus, to my father's house, that he may testify to my brethren, lest they also come into this place of torment?

Preachers and expositors have endeavored to get over this difficult spot as well as they could; and the most feasible method they have been able to hit upon, appears to be this, namely, that it was not from any affection or good will towards his *brethren*, that this unhappy man desired they might not come to his miserable abode; but that it was wholly on his *own* account; knowing, it is said, that their company would only aggravate his own sufferings, and enhance the horrors of his already insupportable doom. The passage, to be sure, gives no countenance to such an idea, but then the manifest affection and benevolence of the rich man in hell must be accounted for in some way; and the ingenuity of the whole body of Christian divines, both

Catholic and Protestant, appear to have been able to imagine no other.

It is well known that one of the peculiar principles of the Roman Catholic faith is the supposed efficacy of what is called the "invocation of saints:" that is, praying to, and invoking the aid of departed saints in heaven. In support of this principle, they, among other things, argue as follows: "that since the rich man in hell was concerned for the salvation of his relations on earth, it is much more probable that the saints in heaven are interested for us, and are ready to pray for us, when we earnestly solicit the benefit of their intercession."

In reply to this Catholic argument, and strongly objecting to it, Archbishop Tillotson, in a sermon entitled, "Christ the only mediator between God and men," remarks, in reference to the case of the rich man, as follows: "Nor is it so likely that the wicked in hell should have any share in that, which St. Paul tells us is the great virtue of the saints in heaven; I mean *charity*: and if they have *not*, then no argument can be drawn from it." He then further remarks, without however, intimating that he approved of the sentiment, that "some of their (the Catholic) commentators think, that this motion of the rich man to Abraham, concerning his brethren, did not proceed from charity to *them*, but to *himself*; lest *his* torment and punishment should be increased by their going to hell, by the means of the ill example which he had given them, when he was upon earth."

He then adds, in rather a sarcastic style, as follows: "Cardinal Cajetan thinks that he (the rich man) was concerned for his brethren out of *pride* and *ambition*, and because it would be for the honor of his family,

to have some of them in that glory (so far above any thing in this world) which he saw Abraham and Lazarus possessed of." This is a reason (says Tillotson,) which I confess I should not have thought of, and yet perhaps it might be likely enough to enter into the mind of a *Cardinal*." Such are the remarks of Archbishop Tillotson upon this point: not very much to the credit of the commonly received opinion.

Dr. Adam Clarke, the Methodist commentator, with all his resources, could find no other reason to assign for the earnest petition of the rich man in behalf of his brethren, but that it must have been on his *own* account, and that he apprehended their coming also into that place of torment, would enhance the miseries of his own deplorable condition. His remark upon this part of the passage is as follows:—"The iniquitous conduct of relatives and friends, who have been perverted by the bad example of those who are *lost*, is a source of *present* punishment to them, and if *they* come also to the same place of torment, must be, to those who were the instruments of bringing them thither, an *eternal* source of anguish.—Those who have been instruments of bringing others into hell, shall suffer the deeper perdition on that account."

Now on what authority is the declaration grounded, that the bad example of this rich man had perverted, or was calculated to pervert, his brethren? Our Saviour has intimated nothing of the kind. And the commentator himself had just before remarked concerning him, that "He is not accused of licentious discourse, of speaking an irreverent word against divine revelation, or the ordinances of God. In a word, (says he,) his *probity* is not attacked, nor is he accused of any

of those crimes which *pervert* the soul or *injure* civil society." Yet he here represents him as deprecating the idea of *their* coming to him into that place of torment, because he had *perverted* them, the reflection of which he apprehended, would add to his own torment.

Such discrepancies, are the unavoidable consequence of assuming false premises, and then attempting to make circumstances conform to them.

Enough has perhaps been said upon this particular part of the parable, to show the unreasonableness and inconsistency of the usual interpretation which has been given of it; but an additional idea occurs to me, relative to the same circumstance, which I beg leave briefly to offer.

Is it not an admitted article of the orthodox faith, that the devil, or Satan is a real *personal* being? Is it not also understood that he is constantly, though invisibly beguiling and enticing mankind into sin, and, by his deceptive arts, leading them, in immense numbers, down to hell? Yes, this you know is constantly taught as sound divinity. Why then is not the *devil* apprehensive also, that his successful exertions in betraying so many immortal spirits into ruin, and leading them down to that hell of everlasting fire, prepared for himself and his angels, will increase his own eternal condemnation and torment? That he has no fears of this, is evident; or else he would cease tempting mankind to sin. Whereas we are often told, by preachers and writers, especially tract writers, how pleased the devil is to see people going on, and indulging themselves in all manner of iniquity; and what a hellish satisfaction he enjoys in conducting his vassals, men and women, down to the regions of everlasting woe. But if this is agreeable to

the nature and disposition of the *devil*, how is it that the *wicked*, who resemble him here, and who of course will much more so in *hell*, should be unwilling that others should come there, lest it should increase their own torment? And why should the rich man, partaking of the very nature and disposition of the devil, feel concerned lest his brethren should come to that place with him?

I offer these obvious considerations to show you,—what I think must be evident to persons of the most moderate discernment, unbiassed by a popular tradition, which could only have originated in an age of great intellectual darkness,—that the common opinion upon this subject, *cannot* be correct—is utterly inconsistent, and grossly absurd.

I consider it altogether necessary that you should be satisfied upon this point, in the first place; because, until you are convinced that the commonly received exposition of this parable is erroneous, I have no expectation that you will relinquish it. Nor have I any wish that you should. Indeed, you ought not to do it, without such a conviction; for why should a person discard an opinion, as erroneous, until he is convinced that it is so? He ought not; and it is on this account that I have deemed it necessary to be so particular in the consideration of all the circumstances related in this account; that a full view might be had of it, and an enlightened judgment formed of it. For I am no friend to an implicit confidence in the opinions of any man, or any number of men; nor to a change of sentiment on an important subject, upon slight or insufficient grounds.

But we come now to notice father Abraham's reply

to this second request of the rich man. "I pray thee, therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house, for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment." What is the venerable patriarch's reply? "Abraham saith unto him, they have Moses and the prophets; let them hear *them*."

What is the amount of this answer? It is obviously this—as if he should have said, there is no necessity that Lazarus should be sent upon such a mission to your brethren, to give them any instruction, or to apprize them of any dangers. They have competent and faithful teachers and advisers already, to whom they may safely, and with confidence, apply; they have the sacred writings of their inspired sages always at hand to consult, which contain the recorded history of their nation, and in which their duty is faithfully and minutely delineated, and their *future destinies* declared with *prophetic* and unerring certainty. "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear *them*."

It must be seen that the rich man and his brethren are contemplated as being *Jews*, who, as the peculiar people of God, were favored with an express revelation, beyond what had been given to any other nation or people. To them pertained "the adoption and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the promises." And of whom, says the apostle, "as pertaining to the flesh, Christ came." Abraham, therefore, who was called and regarded as the father of that nation, says to the rich man, in reference to his brethren, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them: that is, they have the writings of Moses and the prophets, let them attend to them, let

them carefully examine those sacred records, where they will find all necessary information, instruction and counsel. Let them search those scriptures which they profess to believe, and so highly to venerate, in which "they think they have eternal life," and which, among other things, testify of the Messiah, his coming, his reign of righteousness and peace; the excellence of his government, and the glories of his kingdom. There they will learn that the reign or dispensation of the Messiah was to embrace *all nations*; a "salvation prepared before the face of all people." "A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of God's people Israel." The "heavenly Shiloh," unto whom "the gathering of the people should be." The "seed of the woman, that should bruise the serpent's head." "The desire of all nations;" and in whom it is promised and solemnly declared, that all nations, families, and kindreds of the earth shall be blessed.

These things Moses and the prophets have expressly testified concerning the Messiah. They have particularly foretold and described the circumstances of his birth, his life, his character, and his offices, his labors, and his sufferings, the miracles he should perform, the treatment he would receive. They have predicted the cruel and mournful tragedy of his death, the amazing phenomena of his resurrection, the promulgation of his gospel, the opposition and persecution it would have to encounter, its progress, its influence, and its ultimately universal and glorious conquest over all the rage of men, and the rulers of the "darkness of this world." They have foretold the Redeemer's triumph over principalities and powers, bringing crowns and sceptres at his feet; destroying all enmity, reconciling the world,

restoring all things, as “spoken by the mouth of all God’s holy prophets, since the world began ;” destroying “the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations ;” “swallowing up *death in victory*, and wiping *tears from off all faces* ;” and his being God’s “salvation to the ends of the earth.”

These things being so plainly predicated of the Messiah and his reign, in the *Jewish scriptures*, well might father Abraham, who “saw Christ’s day, and was glad,” reply to the rich man’s request concerning his brethren—“They have Moses and the prophets ; let them hear *them*.”

But the patriarch’s answer is not satisfactory. The unhappy man still earnestly urges his request. “He said, Nay, father Abraham : but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.” He appears to be greatly concerned for the safety of his brethren, and there is not the least evidence given that his anxiety for them was not from real affection and benevolence. Nor does the reply of Abraham at all intimate that he understood that such was not the motive of this part of the suppliant’s entreaty. On the contrary, he treats his application as if it was sincerely intended for the benefit of his relatives ; nor does the passage give any countenance to a different supposition. In this view of the case, thus strongly corroborated, the *hades*, or *hell*, in which the rich man is said to have lifted up his eyes, would not seem to be so *wicked* a place, nor its tenants so entirely abandoned by every good quality or generous emotion, as has been generally supposed ; but rather that it is a place of sincere prayer, and of benevolent feelings.

But I cannot leave this part of the account without noticing Dr. Clarke's remarks upon it. After quoting the words of the rich man, in reference to his brethren,—“If one went unto them from the dead, they will repent”—he says, “Many are desirous to see an inhabitant of the other world, and to converse with him, in order to know what *passes there*.” And then, in a sort of triumph, and in language which I almost shudder to repeat, he exclaims, “Make way! here is a damned soul, which Jesus Christ has evoked from the hell of fire! Hear him! Hear him tell of his torments! hear him utter his regrets! But we cannot see him. No; God has, in his mercy, spared you, for the present, this punishment. How could you bear the sight of this damned spirit? Your very nature would fall at the appearance. Jesus keeps him, as it were, behind the curtain, and holds a conversation with him in your hearing, which you have neither *faith* nor *courage* sufficient to hold with him yourselves.”

I have never met with a statement more horrid than this! But revolting as it is, I must beg you to reflect upon it for a moment, that you may see what barbarous sentiments have been incorporated into the mild and heavenly doctrines of the gospel, by a heathenish superstition, and by the vain imaginations of even good and pious men.

“Make way! (says the commentator,) here is a damned soul, which Jesus has evoked from the hell of fire! Hear him! Hear him tell of his torments! Hear him utter his regrets! But you cannot see him. No; you could not bear the sight of this damned spirit!” But why not? *Abraham*, it seems, could bear the sight, and could converse with him with per-

fect composure ! And *Jesus* could see him, and hold conversation with him, with entire satisfaction ! But “ he keeps him (says the commentator) behind the curtain,” from the view of mankind, who, in their present imperfect state, have “ neither *faith* nor *courage* enough to endure the sight of this damned spirit !” But it would seem, according to the Doctor’s statement, that when Christians shall get to *heaven*, and shall be glorified in holiness and felicity, like Abraham and *Jesus*, then they can behold a “ damned spirit ;” yea, millions of them, in tormenting flames, with perfect delight, and without any troublesome sensations of compassion or sympathy to annoy them, or to mar their pure and sublime pleasures ! But *now* the Doctor says, they have not *faith* and *courage* enough for such a sight ; their very nature would fall at the appearance. The scene must be “ kept behind the curtain.” It is an exhibition which can only be endured and relished by those whose natures are perfected in holiness and heavenly glory !!!

My hearers, I appeal to you, if these are not the just and necessary inferences which result from the premises here assumed and laid down by this learned and pious commentator. Such, indeed, I cheerfully allow him to have been. But it cannot be required that we should “ keep behind the curtain ” such enormous errors, however they may have had the sanction of ages, and of eloquence and worth. They should be brought forth into the full light of the gospel of *Jesus*, that they may be *revealed*, and that they may be *consumed* “ by the spirit of his mouth,” and *destroyed* “ by the brightness of his coming.”

In pursuing the subject we would remark, that

misery is the consequence, the fruit of sin, both by the order of Providence, and by the decree of Heaven. Hence to the Israelites, the Lord by the prophet says, "If ye will be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye be disobedient and rebellious, ye shall be devoured by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence." Of these evils, repentance, which implies turning from iniquity, is the proposed preservative, and the prescribed remedy. "Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruin."

Of these important truths, the rich man appears to have been well aware; and he is therefore anxious that his brethren, whom he considers as being in a sinful and corrupt state, should be brought to repentance; and he thinks this would be the effect produced, if one from the dead should visit them. "Nay, (says he) father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent."

We now come to the patriarch's *final* reply. "And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

Considering the passage still in a literal sense, we may remark, in reference to this answer of Abraham, that one from the dead could not be expected to testify any thing contrary to the inspired writings of Moses and the prophets; and nothing more true, and more necessary to be believed and practised; for *they* have fully shown and declared what the Lord requires of man, even that he should do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with God. Nor could one from the dead bring any new and more convincing evidence of the

divine origin and truth of those scriptures, than has been exhibited, and than themselves contain:—none but what would be as likely to be disputed, and as easily evaded. Dr. Clarke very justly remarks upon this point—“That the sacred writings contain such proofs of a divine origin, that though all the dead were to arise, to convince an unbeliever of the truths therein declared, the conviction could not be greater, nor the proof more evident, of the divinity and truth of these sacred records, than that which themselves afford.”

Further, the commentator inquires—“What influence could the personal appearance of a spirit have on an unbelieving and corrupted heart? None, except to terrify it for the moment, and afterwards to leave it ten thousand reasons for *uncertainty* and *doubt*. Christ caused this to be exemplified in the most literal manner, by raising Lazarus from the dead. And did this convince the unbelieving Jews? No. They were so much the more enraged; and from that moment, conspired both the death of Lazarus and of Christ.”

The replies of father Abraham to the earnest and renewed solicitation of the rich man concerning his five brethren, present another important consideration, to which I now request your careful attention; and which, with the remarks and observations it may suggest, will finish the present lecture.

The consideration to which I allude, is founded upon the circumstance that Abraham, in both his answers to the request of the rich man in behalf of his brethren, expressly refers those brethren to the scriptures of the *Old Testament*, as containing every thing necessary for them to understand and believe, and entirely sufficient for their government and direction.—“They

have Moses and the prophets ; let them hear them"—and,—“If they hear not them, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”

It has been commonly understood, that the rich man's request went upon the supposition that a disembodied spirit sent back to this world to admonish the living, would particularly inform them of the condition of departed souls in the invisible world, and that Lazarus, if sent to his brethren, would describe to them the deplorable situation of their once-loved, and still fondly-remembered brother,—tormented in an endless hell of raging flames,—without the hope of deliverance, or even a drop of water to cool his tongue. And that these things being testified unto them, with the impressive solemnity of one sent from the dead, would alarm them, convince them of the reality of those unseen and eternal sufferings, and lead them to repentance, that they might escape them.

Now, supposing these to have been the facts of the case, and such the meaning and the object of the rich man's entreaties in behalf of his brethren, how shall we account for father Abraham's reply, and for his directing them to hear Moses and the prophets? What have *they* said in relation to the subject of punishment and suffering in a future state after death? Nothing at all.—We say this deliberately, after very careful inquiry and examination. In a former lecture, the word *hell*, as to its origin, translation, and meaning, as found in the scriptures both of the Old and New Testaments, was particularly inquired into, and illustrated. It was noticed that the original word, and the only one that is translated hell in the *Old Testament*, is *sheol*, and that it in no instance means, or can with any color of

reason, be supposed to signify a place of punishment in a future state. And to show that this is not merely the opinion of *Universalists*, we quoted several of the most learned and approved writers and commentators of other denominations, who agree that the word rendered *hell* in the Old Testament, does not mean a place or state of suffering in another world; and that the original word *sheol*, and *hades* answering to it, ought never to have been translated hell, as that word is now commonly understood.

Such, we showed, was the opinion of the learned Dr. Campbell, of Dr. Whitby, and of Dr. Adam Clarke. It is a fact, my hearers, of which a careful examination will convince you, that a hell of torment, or suffering in a future state, is never once mentioned in the writings of Moses and the prophets; nor is it once intimated by them that any person ever thought that either himself, or any of his relatives, or any being in the creation of God, was in any danger of such sufferings in another world.

How then can it be supposed, that father Abraham should direct the brethren of the rich man to hear Moses and the prophets, to consult the writings of the Old Testament, as containing sufficient warning and instruction, in relation to a place or state of eternal woe and misery, when in fact, they have never mentioned it in a single instance? They often speak of people's dying, and going to *sheol*, or *hell*, as it is translated; but they never meant by it, a place of suffering beyond the grave. This is admitted. No one, who values his reputation for theological information and accuracy, will pretend to controvert it.

“ They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear

them.”—Well, father Abraham, suppose they do hear them, and pay strict attention to every word they have written, will they learn any thing of them, about this hell of torment, for devils and wicked men beyond the shores of time, in the eternal world? No; they will gain no information from *them* upon this subject. From any thing that can be gathered from their writings, from Genesis to Malachi, neither Moses nor the prophets ever thought of such a place. Certain it is,—and I wish it may be kept in mind, that neither Moses nor the prophets, have described or spoken of such a place, nor given any intimation that it exists, or ever will exist. But it may be asked,—If Moses and the prophets have said nothing in relation to the case of the rich man, why should Abraham refer his brethren to those scriptures? In reply to which, we remark,—that although Moses and the prophets have said nothing about a hell of torments for the souls or bodies of men in a future state, nor once intimated that any human being was ever in danger of such torments, or of any sufferings beyond the present life; yet they have said much which prophetically relates to the condition of the rich man, or rather, to the true meaning of this figurative or parabolical description. This we expect will be clearly seen in a subsequent Lecture.

In closing this discourse we will propose an important query, and leave it for you to reflect upon, and to answer, according to the dictates of your own understandings. It is this:—If the scriptures of the *Old Testament* revelation contain no account or intimation of any punishment in *sheol* or *hell*, nor of any sufferings to which mankind are liable in a future state, is it reasonable to expect a revelation of such

sufferings,—even of eternal woe and misery,—in the *New Testament*?—The new and better covenant, which, the Apostle says, was established upon *better promises*? Is it a reasonable proposition, that the *gospel of Jesus*, the news of heavenly grace!—the gospel, by which life and immortality have been brought to light,—the gospel, which is emphatically “good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people,”—is it reasonable to believe, that this gospel of the *favor* of God, and of his everlasting love and good will towards all men, has revealed terrors and torments in another world, which the *law*, the ministry of condemnation as it is called, never declared?—which Moses and the prophets never threatened?

My Brethren, may not the gospel have been long misunderstood? Must it not be misinterpreted, and grossly perverted, when it is represented and proclaimed as containing the most fearful revelation that ever was made to man?—the most sorrowful tidings that ever were heard? I leave this query with you, my hearers. Reflect upon it carefully, and prayerfully, calmly and without prejudice. And may God give us all a right understanding of his word and gospel, of the writings of Moses and the prophets, and of Christ and his apostles, and lead us into all truth and holy obedience, to our own unspeakable comfort and joy, and to the glory and praise of God. Amen.

LECTURE VI.

LUKE xvi. 31.

“ If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”

IN the preceding Lectures we have taken careful and minute notice of the several important particulars stated in the parable, or account, of which the text is the conclusion. The characters of the two individuals, a rich man and a beggar, we have carefully inquired into; with the circumstances of their life, their death, and their different subsequent destinies, as they are emphatically represented in the passage.

In the course of our investigation, we have several times reminded you that we were not then giving our own opinion of the true meaning and import of this interesting portion of the teachings of our Saviour; but were describing the manner in which it had commonly been treated,—the light in which it had been exhibited, and the application which had been very generally made of it. We have also, all along, stated the objections which appear to us to lie against such a construction and application;—showing that they necessarily involve conclusions and consequences which are wholly inadmissible, and even absurd; and that therefore the common interpretation *cannot* be correct.

As we have shown, I trust satisfactorily, that the passage under consideration is not a literal statement of facts and circumstances, it must therefore be a *figurative*, or *paraboli- cal* representation. This you know was the common method of instruction chosen by our Saviour. And it may not be inappropriate, here, to offer a few general remarks relative to our Saviour's parables.

In the first place, it will be observed by the careful reader, that the manner in which they are introduced is various. Sometimes it is expressly stated that "Jesus put forth a parable," or "he spake unto the people in parables, saying," &c. At other times, it is not so declared, but the form of the discourse and the language employed, show that it was intended as such, and so was understood by the hearers. Hence, when our Saviour, in urging upon the disciples the necessity of watchfulness, employed the similitude of servants watching for the return of their absent master, or lord, saying, "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants," &c. "Be ye therefore ready also; for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not." Although our Saviour did not notify them that this was a parable, yet it was at once so understood; and Peter immediately asked him,—“ Lord, speakest thou this *parable* unto us, or even to all? ”

Again; sometimes parables are put hypothetically, or by way of supposition. As for instance, the parable of the "Lost sheep," which our Saviour introduces thus—"What man of you, having an hundred

sheep,"—that is, suppose a man having a large number of sheep, should lose one of them, doth he not leave the flock, and go and seek after the one that was lost, or gone astray? Again—"What man intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first and counteth the cost"? "Or, which of you having an ox or an ass fallen into a pit," &c. These are parables, or figurative representations, predicated upon supposed cases or circumstances.

The kingdom of heaven—that is, the gospel church, or the reign of the Messiah,—is compared or likened to various things; as to a pearl of great price, treasure hid in a field, to a blade of corn, to a mustard seed, to leaven, to a net cast into the sea, &c. These are all parables. Sometimes they are declared to be so; but all such figurative descriptions are not the less truly parables, whether so declared to be or not.

But sometimes, and very frequently, parables are expressed in *positive* language, which, literally taken, would imply the actual occurrence of the facts and events described; whereas, this was not intended, but merely a statement for the purpose of illustration. Let me give you an instance or two from the *Old Testament*.

Do you remember the historical account of the cruel and infamous Abimelech—how he was made king of Israel, after having slain seventy of his brethren, the sons of Jerubbaal? *Jotham*, however, the youngest son of the family, we are told, escaped the massacre, "for he hid himself." And when he was told what was done, "he went and stood in the top of mount Gerozim, and lifted up his voice, and cried and said, Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, that God may hearken unto you. The trees went

forth, on a time, to anoint a king over them.”—And he goes on to relate how they applied, first to the olive-tree, next to the fig-tree, then to the vine; all of which declining the honor of such promotion,—the *bramble* was lastly solicited, and accepted the office.

Now, what must we think of such a statement? No one is so credulous, or so simple, as to suppose it to be a relation of facts and circumstances which actually occurred. It is wholly fictitious; it was a figurative representation, and a very ingenious and forcible one, of events which had just taken place, together with a prophetic allusion to the consequences which would follow. Yet the language employed is that of strict historical narrative.

Another remarkable instance is the parable of the prophet Nathan, by which he convicted king David of his crime, in the case of Uriah. Nathan “came to David and said unto him, There were two men in one city, the one rich and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds; but the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe-lamb, which he had bought and nourished up; and it grew up together with him, and with his children: it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man; and he spared to take of his own flock, and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man’s lamb, and dressed it for the wayfaring man that was come to him.”

The story, or parable, was so well arranged, and related with so much address, that David took it for a statement of facts; and his anger was greatly kindled, and he declared that the man that had done that thing

should surely die. Then Nathan applied the parable, and said to David—"Thou art the man."

Now here we may remark that the language employed by the prophet Nathan, is the language of facts just such as he would naturally have used if the circumstances stated had actually occurred; whereas it was only a fictitious representation, for the purpose of giving a forcible illustration of David's very reprehensible conduct in the case above mentioned.

But the *New Testament* also abounds with instances, in which the language of parables is as positive and circumstantial, as if a description of particular facts and events had been intended. As instances, observe the following declarations made at the commencement of parables.—"Two men went up into the temple to pray, the one a pharisee, the other a publican." "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves," &c. "A certain man had two sons: and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me; and he divided unto them his living," &c. "There was a certain rich man which had a steward," &c. "A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard." And "a certain man planted a vineyard, and let it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time." "A certain man made a great supper," &c., and many other similar ones that might be named: all which are declarations concerning persons and circumstances which might well be supposed to happen, according to the customs of the time and country. But we are not to understand them as descriptive of particular individuals or literal facts, which took place at a definite time. They are *supposed* cases, presented for the purpose of conveying

important doctrinal and moral instruction, in an easy and forcible manner. And moreover, it can hardly fail to be noticed concerning the parables of our Saviour, that they are often in a high degree *prophetic*, referring to events far distant, and of the greatest interest and magnitude.

These remarks relative to the nature and object of our Saviour's parables in general, are strikingly applicable to the one which forms the subject of these lectures. It has been argued by some, that the account must be intended as a historical statement of facts concerning two individuals, because our Saviour expressly says, "There *was* a certain rich man,"—"And there *was* a certain beggar, named Lazarus." But we have seen that the same kind of language, equally personal and positive, is employed in other parables, of which it is not claimed that they should be understood literally. Besides, we have seen that there are several particulars stated in relation to the rich man and Lazarus, and also Abraham, which, if taken according to the natural and common meaning of the language, would present the most palpable absurdities.

Indeed, I cannot suppose there is a person present this evening, who would acknowledge it his belief that this passage contains a true and literal account of the condition of souls in another world. Admitting, therefore, as I think you all must, that this is a parable,—What is its meaning? and what are the instructions which our Saviour intended to convey by it?

And here I would remark that it has been laid down as an important rule in theology, and indispensably necessary to a correct interpretation of the scriptures, that every text must agree with its context. There is, without doubt, a concurrence of design in the

different parts of a discourse upon the same subject ; and the meaning of the different expressions employed, must be in conformity with the general design ; and they must be understood according to the connexion in which they occur. Because it must be obvious to every observing person, that the same expressions, when occurring in different connexions, convey a very different meaning.

Let me illustrate this by a single scriptural example. The apostle, speaking in reference to the state of the wicked and ungodly, describes them as being *dead*. Again, the same apostle speaking of *Christians*, represents them as being dead also. But when we notice the connexion in which the word occurs, we at once see that its meaning is very different in one place from what it is in the other.

The wicked, he pronounces “ dead in *trespasses* and *sins*, walking according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.” But to Christian believers he says, “ Set your affection on things above—not on things on the earth ; for ye are *dead*, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”

In ascertaining, then, the design and meaning of a parable, it is important to inquire whether it is connected with any thing else, and if it is, what is the nature and the general import of the discourse with which it is connected, and of which it forms a part.

Upon examination, it will plainly appear, my hearers, that this parable is not an isolated statement, or one commenced and finished without reference to any thing which precedes or follows it ; but that it stands intimately connected with other descriptions and illustrations of the same character and import, and

referring to the same events. This is an important consideration, and merits careful attention. And here I wish to remind you of a circumstance, of which you have doubtless before been apprized, and which it is necessary to bear in mind, in order to read the scriptures understandingly; namely, that the division of them into chapters and verses, is wholly arbitrary, and of modern date. They were not so originally; and the division, in many instances, is very injudicious. Hence we very often find that a new chapter, instead of being the commencement of a new subject, or a new argument, occurs in the midst of a continued discourse, not necessarily separated from the preceding chapter, even by a common period. This division of the scriptures is only useful on account of the convenience it affords for a reference to different parts.

We are now prepared to remark, that to assist us in discovering the connexion, and the design and meaning of the parable under consideration, it may be useful to go as far back as the 9th chapter of this book, called "the Gospel according to St. Luke."—We shall there, at the 51st verse, find it stated as follows: "And it came to pass, when the time was come that he (Jesus) should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem." Upon this passage the commentator, Dr. Clarke, thus remarks—"Let it be observed, that all which follows here in Luke, to chapter 19th, verse 45th, is represented by him, as done by Jesus in his *last* journey from Galilee to Jerusalem." And in another place he observes, that during this last journey of Jesus from Galilee, through Samaria, to Jerusalem, he constantly "preached and taught, and cured the diseased as usual."

Our Saviour, in this journey, was accompanied by his disciples, and many others also attended him, especially the cavilling pharisees and Jewish doctors; and sometimes, he was attended by great multitudes of people; to whom, at all opportunities he constantly delivered his salutary instructions, admonitions, and counsels. It was in the course of his teachings, during this journey, that he delivered the noted parable of the rich man and Lazarus, which we are endeavoring to illustrate. But this was not the only parable that he put forth on this journey: he spake many others; and what is remarkable, and which I wish you particularly to observe is, that one prominent subject is plainly to be discovered, and is obviously alluded to in all of them. What is this subject? It is a prophetic description, and parabolical representation of the Divine dispensations towards two great divisions of mankind, the *Jews* and the *Gentiles*, with an especial reference to the desolating judgments which were approaching, and would soon fall upon the former.

This, we confidently believe, is not mere conjecture. We expect to make it appear indisputable, that this was the grand subject and design of the parable upon which we are lecturing; and a brief reference to the other parables in connexion with it, as delivered by our Saviour, during this same journey, will, we are persuaded, satisfy you that this is the prominent subject embraced in most if not all of them.

Let us notice some of these parables. In the 10th chapter, 24th and following verses, in the conclusion of his reply to the blasphemous accusations of his inveterate enemies, the scribes and pharisees, who charged our Saviour with casting out devils by Beelzebub, He says—"When the unclean spirit is gone

out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest ; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself ; and they enter in and dwell there ; and the last state of that man is worse than the first." If we should be at any loss as to the true meaning and application of this figurative description, all doubt will be removed by a reference to the same account as related by St. Matthew, 12th and 45th. For there we learn that our Saviour himself made the application, and showed his meaning, by saying, "Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation." Dr. Clarke very justly remarks upon this, and says, "And so it was ; for they (the Jews) grew worse and worse, as if totally abandoned to diabolic influence, till at last the besom of destruction swept them and their privileges, national and religious, utterly away."

The case of Jonas and the Ninevites, which is next mentioned, has the same application to the Jewish people. "The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, (or this race of people) and condemn it ; for they repented at the preaching of Jonas, and behold a greater than Jonas is here."

In the beginning of the 12th chapter, St. Luke states, that "an innumerable multitude of people were gathered together, insomuch that they trode one upon another." Jesus does not suffer the opportunity to pass without communicating important instruction. He cautions his disciples to beware of the leaven, or *doctrine* of the pharisees ; reminds them of the perils to which they were exposed from the craft and violence of their enemies ; encourages their confidence in the constant

care and providence of their heavenly Father, and shows, by an appropriate parable, the folly of unreasonable worldly anxiety; the great evil and danger of covetousness; the precarious and unsatisfying nature of temporal riches; and urges the necessity of constant watchfulness and diligence. This he illustrates and enforces by another well-chosen representation. It is the parable of the servants: "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding. Blessed are those servants whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching," &c. Then, in reference to himself, he says, "I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished! Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, nay, but rather division," &c.

It can hardly fail to be observed that our Saviour is here speaking of scenes that were then fast approaching. It was the common expectation of the Jews that the appearance of their Messiah would be attended by *peace*, and all manner of *temporal prosperity*; but this he assures them would not be the case, with respect to *them*, but the reverse of it. "Think not that I am come to send peace on the earth, (or on *this land*, as it is said it should be rendered) but rather *divisions*, and a *sword*." Dr. Clarke expounds the passage as follows: "Do not imagine, as the Jews vainly do, that I am come to force out the Roman power, and give temporal prosperity (to the land of Judea,) I am not come for this purpose, but to send forth the Roman *sword*, to cut off a disobedient and rebellious na-

tion, the cup of whose iniquity is already full, and whose crimes cry aloud for speedy vengeance." And it is very certain, as the commentator further remarks, that "from the time they rejected the Messiah, they were a prey to the most cruel and destructive factions; they employed their time in butchering one another, till the Roman sword was unsheathed against them, and desolated the land." But this was not to take place till after his death, until the bloody baptism with which he was to be baptized should be accomplished.

Our Saviour then turns to the *people*, and by an easy similitude, says, "When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, there cometh a shower; and so it is. And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, there will be heat; and it cometh to pass. Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?" As if he had said, How is it that ye do not discover from the ancient predictions of the prophets, and from the events which are now taking place, that a most important crisis is hastening, and that these are indeed the days of the Messiah, which were distinctly foretold and described by those prophets?

Perhaps some of my hearers may be ready to inquire, what has all this to do with the subject under consideration? We think it has much to do with it. We are now endeavoring to discover the true meaning of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. There have been, and there still are, very different opinions concerning it. The language employed admits of various constructions. How shall we ascertain the correct one? To do this, we think it important, and even necessary, to examine the connexion in which the parable is found. This is obviously reasonable and proper.

Let us illustrate this by a supposed case. You have a letter or communication sent to you in writing. Instead of commencing its perusal at the beginning, you cast your eye upon a certain part in the body of it. The language appears to be figurative, or ambiguous, and of doubtful meaning, and you are at a loss how to understand it. What would you do in the case? Why, clearly, you would immediately look back and see what was the subject of the communication, what was the object of the writer, and what he was aiming to describe or convey. By this means you would discover in what sense the language employed should be taken, and then the meaning would be plain.

Now this is the course we are taking in relation to the parable, the true meaning of which we are seeking. The language, at least a great part of it, is obviously figurative. We go back, we inquire if it is connected with any thing else; and if so, what the connexion is? We have seen that our Saviour was for the last time on his way from Galilee to Jerusalem, that he was accompanied by his disciples, and sometimes surrounded by a multitude, consisting, as we may suppose, of Jews, scribes, pharisees, and others that he was constantly engaged in teaching, and almost wholly by way of parable. What then were the *principal*, the most *usual*, and *prominent* topics of his discourses? These are important inquiries, and will lead, we think, to the true and satisfactory understanding of the parable under consideration.

We shall, therefore, pursue this course as briefly as we can consistently with a careful examination, until we arrive at the parable itself; when its meaning and intended application will, we trust, be exceedingly evident.

But we have come now to a very interesting spot.

An incident occurs, which our Saviour improves by way of the most solemn admonition and warning. At the beginning of the 13th chapter of this gospel by St. Luke, the evangelist says, "There were present, at that season, some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering, said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, nay : but except ye repent, ye shall all *likewise* perish. Or those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwell in Jerusalem? I tell you, nay : but except *ye* repent, ye shall all *likewise* perish!"

This admonition, you know, my hearers, is commonly interpreted and applied as having reference to the destiny of the impenitent in a future state. But a careful attention to the connexion of the passage, and the attending circumstances, will make it very evident that this was not the meaning and application intended, but that our Saviour was giving warning of some fearful calamity, some dreadful slaughter, by which the corrupt and impenitent people of the Jews were about to be overtaken. And he employs the two instances of sudden and unexpected slaughter above quoted, as a figure of their own approaching destruction. Except *ye repent*, ye shall all *likewise*, or in like manner, perish. Dr. Clarke, in his commentary upon the place, fully adopts this interpretation. He says, "This prediction of our Lord was literally fulfilled. When the city (of Jerusalem) was taken by the Romans, multitudes of the priests, &c. who were going on with their sacrifices, were slain, and their blood mingled with the blood of their victims, (similar to the fate of those

Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices,) and multitudes were buried under the ruins of the walls, houses, and temple." Similar to the fate of those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell and slew them. "Both these cases, (says the commentator) exhibit a specimen of the *manner* in which ye (Jews) shall perish, if ye do not speedily repent."

You doubtless, my hearers, have often read the passage upon which we have just been remarking. Do you remember also that a *parable* immediately succeeds it? It is the notable one of the *fruitless fig-tree*. It was a common custom of our Saviour, after stating a fact, or uttering a prediction, to illustrate it by a parable, and sometimes by several successive parables, all concurring in the same design. In this of the barren fig-tree, Jesus sets forth the divine forbearance towards the nation of the Jews, and withal strongly depicts the certainty of their destruction, if they should continue obstinate in impenitence.

Immediately after the declaration "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish," the evangelist says, He (Jesus) spake also this parable: "A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard;" that is, the great spiritual Husbandman, the Lord and Governor of the earth, planted the *Jewish church*, and established it in the land of Judea. And "He came seeking fruit thereon, and found none." He required that the Jewish people should be obedient and fruitful in works of righteousness, according to the care and culture bestowed on them; but he found it not so with them. They were become like a tree "whose fruit withereth," barren and unprofitable, and the axe is laid at its root.

The owner, therefore, "said unto the dresser of his

vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none; cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering, said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it, and if it bear fruit, well, and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down." You have, probably, often heard this parable illustrated and applied. How has it been done? It has, I believe, commonly been explained by preachers in their public discourses, without paying any regard to the preceding circumstances and remarks, which evidently led to it; the preacher has gone on to illustrate it so as to refer its application to the unregenerate at large, and to *individual* sinners of his congregation. He tells them that God has been waiting for their repentance and conversion not only *three* years, but many times that number. He tells them that the *justice* of God requires and demands that the sinner should be cut down and sent to hell; but that the *mercy* of God interposes in opposition to his justice, and pleads that the sinner may be spared a little longer, and then if he continues impenitent and unfruitful, he must be cut off by divine justice, and consigned over to endless torments; and that even *infinite mercy* will then *agree* to it, and be satisfied.

Now such an exposition and application of this parable is evidently without authority or reason. Its design, as appears by the occasion of it, was to describe the corrupt condition and the perilous situation of the Jewish people, and to give a prophetic and parabolical representation of the terrible calamities which were impending over them, and which, without repentance, would speedily involve them in tremendous ruin and destruction.

St. Luke records two other parables in this chapter, in one of which the kingdom of God is likened to a grain of mustard-seed, sown in the earth ; and in the other to leaven hid or infused in meal, till the whole was leavened ; the concurrent design of both of which most evidently was, to represent the progress and influence of the gospel or Christian dispensation among mankind. Then the evangelist adds, “ And he (Jesus) went through the cities and villages, teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem.”

You see, then, he is still on his journey to Jerusalem, his *last* journey ; and as opportunity offers, he is constantly teaching. He knew what scenes awaited him at the end of this journey. He knew also by prophetic inspiration, the approaching and awful fate of that proud city, and its faithless and degenerate inhabitants, who, as our Saviour had before told them, had become so corrupt, that they had made their own once hallowed temple a “ den of thieves.”

But we proceed to notice further what appears to be the burthen and general current of our Lord's discourses on this journey. An incident here occurred, which gave occasion to some very interesting remarks and declarations which should not be lightly passed over, because they have an important bearing upon our subject, as will be hereafter seen. The evangelist says, “ Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved ? ” What does the inquirer mean, and to what does he allude ? We know how the question has been commonly understood ; i. e. it has at once been taken for granted that it referred to a future state of existence ; that the person desired to be informed by our Saviour whether but few only of the human race would escape the torments of hell in an-

other world, and attain to the felicity of the heavenly state. And from the answer which Jesus returns to the question, the inference has been drawn that but few, comparatively, will be ultimately saved, and that far the greatest portion of mankind will be condemned to suffer in unknown regions of despair and horror to all eternity.

But this is contrary to the opinion which appears to be now pretty generally entertained, even by our limitarian brethren. It is now very commonly admitted that far the greater part of mankind will eventually be saved.

There is, however, no reason at all to suppose that the question here proposed to our Saviour had any reference to events beyond the present life. The person making the inquiry may be supposed to have been attending to the teachings of our Saviour; and it would be natural to expect that his question would have reference to the subject of Christ's discourse, or to some prominent part of it. And if the person interrogating was a Jew, as is most probable, he would be likely to inquire concerning the fate of his own nation, which occupied so much of our Saviour's discourse; and in reference to the great calamities which he had so repeatedly and solemnly predicted as about to overwhelm that people.

In this view of the case, the import of the question was in substance as follows: "Lord, are there few only who will escape those coming evils, and be saved or *delivered* from those dreadful calamities? And what course shall be taken to avoid them?" That this was the substance and the object of the inquiry, ap-

pears evident from our Saviour's immediate reply. "And he said unto them," addressing his answer not particularly to the person asking the question, but to all present, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many I say unto you will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." By the *strait* gate here, was doubtless intended to be represented the difficulties and obstacles in the way of receiving and professing the faith of the gospel. The whole system of Jewish rites and traditions, and the whole force of popular opinion and prejudice was against it.

But to what *time* does our Saviour allude when he says, Many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able? The following verses inform us, and it will be seen that the application of the passage was particularly to the *Jews*; and the time not so distant but that, as he elsewhere expressly states, *some of the then present generation should see the prediction fulfilled*. "Many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able." But *when* and *where*? Hearken! whilst the divine teacher explains himself. "When once the master of the house is risen up and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us," &c. *Hath shut to the door*. When once the legal dispensation is closed, its types fulfilled, its shadows fled away, and ye begin to stand without, not having entered into the new covenant or gospel dispensation, and to knock for entrance at the door of the legal institution, which is now closed forever; "And he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity." I cannot approve and acknowledge you in your ceremonial

righteousness, and in your rejection of the gospel covenant—and who, while pretending to keep the *moral* law, actually have made it void through your traditions. “Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you I know you not; depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.”

Then follows a remarkable declaration, “There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth,” &c. These expressions are strongly descriptive of deep distress and anguish, and it is worthy of very particular notice that they are never found in any other connexion than that in which they are here placed; that is, in a description of the earthly calamities of the Jewish nation. The same words occur in several other places, but always in connexion with this particular subject, and with no other. “There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth;” observe what follows: “When ye shall see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God,” all bearing testimony to the Messiah, and to the Christian revelation, “and you yourselves thrust out.” Not thrust out of the kingdom of heaven in *another world*, after having been admitted there, but excluded for your unbelief from the privileges and blessings of the gospel state.

Then our Saviour adds, “And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.” That is, the Gentiles of all nations shall be gathered into the gospel kingdom. “And behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.” Alluding to the Jews and Gentiles, the latter of whom, as St. Paul assures us,

would, even in their fulness, first come in to the Christian church. And then shall the "deliverer come out of Zion, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob; and so all Israel shall be saved." But for their obstinacy and rebellion against God, and their rejection of the Messiah, the most fearful and exterminating judgments awaited them, which were now fast approaching, and of which our Saviour constantly admonished them.

Now observe the close of this chapter, where, still dwelling upon the mournful subject which so constantly occupied his mind, he says—"I must walk to-day, and to-morrow, and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!" And now hear his prophetic declaration. "Behold your house is left unto you desolate; and verily I say unto you, ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

But I must close. My lecture this evening has been unusually long. And you, my attentive audience, may be disappointed that I have advanced no farther in the exposition of our subject. In this I am indeed disappointed myself. Yet I do not see wherein our illustrations and remarks could have been advantageously contracted. We have considered it very important, and even necessary, to a full and correct understanding of the parable, to examine very carefully

its *context*, and the connexion in which it stands ; that we may see what was the main drift and current of our Saviour's discourses, during this his last journey to Jerusalem. Among these discourses, all which appear to have a connected meaning and reference, is found the parable of the rich man and Lazarus.

The course adopted, and which we are pursuing, is calculated to lead to an enlightened, consistent, and correct understanding of this confessedly important and interesting parable, and which, we cannot but hope, will, to the patient and attentive hearer, be convincing and satisfactory.

It will have been observed also, that the course we have taken in these lectures, has led us to examine and illustrate many other passages of scripture, which has not, we trust, been wholly without interest and usefulness.

We have now come to the 15th chapter of Luke, in which are related three successive and very instructing parables, which it will be proper briefly to notice in our next lecture ; and then in the 16th chapter the noted one of the unjust steward, with which stands closely connected the parable which comprises our subject.

I shall, therefore, still expect your patient attention to one, or possibly two more lectures, to complete the course, in this important investigation. And may the light of divine wisdom shine upon our path, and cause us to know the truth, that it may make us free. And, O God, do thou sanctify us through thy truth—thy word is truth. Amen.

LECTURE VII.

LUKE xvi. 31.

“If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”

IN our last Lecture with the view to ascertain the true meaning of the parable of which the text is the close, we commenced an examination of all the public discourses of our Saviour, during his last journey from Galilee to Jerusalem. For this purpose we went as far back as the 9th chapter, where the commencement of this journey is noticed, and pursued our examination to the close of the 14th.

In the 15th chapter we find a continued account of our Saviour's teachings. At its commencement the Evangelist says, “Then drew near unto him, all the publicans and sinners for to hear him; and the pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.” He vindicated his conduct in this instance, by three successive parables; that of a lost sheep, a lost piece of silver, and the prodigal son; all concurring in the same design, to show that the whole race of mankind, Gentiles as well as Jews, belonged to God, and were the *flock*—the *treasure*—the *family* of the one great *Shepherd*, the proprietor and father of all; and that however seeming-

ly, lost to him, for a time, yet that all should eventually be recovered and restored to their rightful owner;— and that it was his appointed business to seek and save the lost. The last of these, called the parable of the prodigal son, has reference to both the Jews and Gentiles, and to the divine dispensations and purposes in relation to them. The younger son, who is represented as leaving his father's house, going into a far country, wasting his substance, and by his extravagance and dissipation, coming to poverty and want, denotes the Gentile nations. The elder son, who remained with his father, and who was offended at the return, and the cordial reception of his brother, represents the Jews, and is particularly descriptive of their character and conduct.

This is the interpretation and reference which the commentator, Dr. Clarke, assigns to this parable. He says, “the *younger* profligate son may represent the *Gentile* world; and the *elder son*, who long served his father, denotes the *Jewish* people. The anger of the elder son, explains itself at once; it means the *indignation* evidenced by the Jews, at the *Gentiles* being received into the *favor* of God, and made fellow heirs of the kingdom of heaven.” And he further says, “the parable of the prodigal son may well represent the conversion of the *Gentile* world, in order that, in the fulness of time, both Jews and *Gentiles* may become one fold, under one shepherd and bishop of souls.”

We come now to the 16th chapter. It will be seen by the manner in which it commences, that it is not a separate discourse, but a continuation of that which is

related in the chapter immediately preceding ; for it begins thus :—“ And He (Jesus) said *also* unto his disciples : ” that is, in addition to what he had just been saying, and, as we shall see, upon the same leading subject, though with a still more especial and direct reference to the Jews. He said, “ There was a certain rich man, which had a steward ; and the same was accused unto him, that he had wasted his goods.” If we consider this parable attentively, we can hardly fail to discover what our Saviour intended to represent by it, and its peculiar suitableness in this place. He had just spoken the parable concerning a man having two sons ; the younger of which, denoting the Gentiles, is said to have left his paternal home, and to have “ wasted his substance with riotous living.” For this, the elder son severely reflects upon him, and reproaches the father for showing him, on his return, too much lenity and kindness. This elder son, representing the *Jews*, claims further in a style of arrogant boasting, that he had constantly been obedient and dutiful, and had never at any time transgressed his father’s commandment ; and he complains that his faithful services had not been duly rewarded.

The parable we are now noticing, of the unjust steward, was evidently intended by our Saviour to be applied to the Jews ; and in it we find their conduct as severely reprehended, as was that of the Gentiles in the preceding parable ; whilst the like penitent confession and return is found wanting.

The circumstances, and the whole tenor of this discourse of our Saviour, justify us in considering the steward in the parable as representing the house of

Israel, or the Jewish nation. As the peculiar people of God, they enjoyed distinguished favors and immunities. They, however, had abused their privileges, and forfeited their high and responsible station.

But what has since been the fate, and what now is the condition of that once highly privileged and exalted nation? Like the steward in this parable, they have been accused of being unfaithful to the trust reposed in them, and of wasting their Lord's goods. They have been called upon to give an account of their stewardship; and a most delinquent account it has appeared to be. And they have been told, in language which could not be misunderstood, that they could "be no longer steward." Hence, on another occasion, our Saviour declared, in application to them, "the kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to another nation, bringing forth the fruits thereof."

Accordingly, the present condition of the Jewish nation is a verification of these prophetic admonitions. Their former prerogatives are annihilated. The glory has departed from them. They are a degraded and despised people; and, according to the faithful word of prophecy—a "hissing and a by-word in all the nations of the earth, among whom they are scattered." And it is remarkable, that like the steward in the parable, they are generally not disposed to *dig*—to cultivate the soil, nor to follow the ordinary laborious employments of others;—and to *beg*, they are too proud, and would be ashamed. But they live and often acquire wealth, by intrigue and craft,—by a peculiar sort of speculation and traffic, and by making

to themselves, in a way not the most commendable, "friends of the mammon of unrighteousness."

The evangelist then observes that "the pharisees, who were covetous, heard all these things; and they derided him." They discovered that the parable of the unjust steward, was intended to refer to them, and contained a severe rebuke upon them, which Jesus then applies to them more directly. "He said unto them, ye are they which justify yourselves before men, but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men, is abomination in the sight of God."

Jesus then returns to the principal subject and design of his discourse, which was to set forth the abrogation of the Jewish system of civil and religious polity, to show that it was now null and void, and was superseded by the introduction of the new covenant or dispensation of the gospel, which now claimed universal attention, and a cordial reception. He also points to the particular period when the obligatory force of the Mosaic law or Jewish institution ceased. He says, "The law and the prophets were until *John*; (John the Baptist) since that time the *kingdom of God* is preached;" that is, the reign of the Messiah is proclaimed; the new covenant or dispensation of the gospel is promulgated, "and every man presseth into it;" alluding particularly to the eagerness with which the publicans and sinners flocked to hear the teachings of Jesus. Or perhaps the declaration should be understood as being *admonitory*; that now the kingdom is preached, and all men *should* earnestly embrace it, and press into it.

Dr. Clarke comments upon the passage as follows :
 “ The law and the prophets continued to be the sole teachers till John came, who first began to proclaim the *glad tidings* of the *kingdom of God* ; and now, he who wishes to be made a partaker of the blessings of that kingdom, must *rush speedily* into it ; as there will be but a short time before an utter destruction shall fall upon this ungodly race. They who wish to be saved, must imitate those who *take a city by storm* ; *rush* into it without delay, as the *Romans* are about to do into *Jerusalem*.”

Our Saviour adds, “ And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.” It was necessary the law or legal dispensation should continue, until all parts of it should be fulfilled. Then it was to “ vanish away,” and give place to a more perfect economy, that “ better covenant, established upon better promises,” of which “ good things to come,” the legal dispensation was but the shadow or typical representation, which consequently would become useless, when the substance and reality should appear.

Immediately after this statement concerning the law, there follows another declaration of our Saviour, the meaning and object of which appear not to have been generally apprehended. The passage is as follows :
 “ Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery ; and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband, committeth adultery.”

This has been commonly understood *literally* ; and the crime here named has been referred to a breach of one of the precepts of the moral law : “ Thou shalt

not commit adultery." Dr. Clarke, in his commentary on the passage, appears to understand it in that sense, and is at a loss to account for its introduction in this place. He thinks it may have been a part of our Lord's sermon on the mount, and that it would stand in a much better connexion there than here. And so it might, if it should be taken literally. Whereas, if it be understood as spoken parabolically, as we are well satisfied it should be, its introduction in this place is natural, the meaning important, and the argument very forcible. Our Saviour was speaking of the *legal* dispensation, and its obligation while it continued in force; but that being fulfilled and accomplished, it was abrogated, or *put away*, and had no longer any binding authority. This he very fitly illustrates in the passage under consideration concerning adultery, which is evidently in the nature of a parable; and the sense intended to be conveyed appears to be this—that should the Jews have put away the law before the time for its abrogation had arrived, they would have been guilty of a sin, like that of the man who should put away his wife, and marry another; but they committed the same or a similar offence, by adhering to the law after the days of *John*, since which time the *kingdom of God* was preached; for they were like the man who married her that was put away by her husband; they remained attached and united to a dispensation which had come to an end, its lifetime having expired, and of course it could have no further claim upon them.*

This, I think, appears very clearly to be the mean-

* Whittemore, in his *Notes on the Parables*, gives, in substance, the same exposition of this passage.

ing of the passage ; and in this view, its connexion and propriety are very obvious. If any further illustration of this case were necessary, I might refer you to the same argument employed by St. Paul, and represented by the same figure or similitude. The passage is in the 7th of Romans, as follows : “ Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law) how that the law hath power over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband, is bound by the law to her husband, so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress ; but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law ; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.” Now hear his application of this supposed case : “ Wherefore, my brethren, *ye* also are become dead to the law, by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.” “ Now, (continues the apostle) we are delivered from the law, *that* being dead, wherein we were held, that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.”

Thus, my hearers, as you must have observed, beginning as far back as appeared to be necessary, we have traced the context of our subject, and noticed the connexion and the prominent features of our Saviour's discourses, until we have arrived at the parable itself, which is the subject of these lectures. By this course we have learned what were the grand and leading topics of our Saviour's teaching, his numerous and inter-

esting parables, predictions, and counsels, during this his last journey from Galilee to Jerusalem. We have seen that he had a constant reference to the condition of the *Jewish people*, their corruptions, their prejudices, and obstinacy; their rejection of him and his gospel, the tremendous judgments which hung over them, and the calamities and desolations which would shortly overtake and overwhelm them. With these declarations and fearful predictions, we have noticed also that he frequently alluded to, and parabolically represented the spread of the gospel among the *gentile nations*; the blessings accompanying its progress and reception, and the degraded and miserable condition of the infatuated and judicially blinded Jews, who, still adhering to the old abrogated, legal institution, spurned at the kingdom of the Messiah, and rejected the counsel of God against themselves.

Such were the prominent topics of our Saviour's teaching, as contained in the *preceding* context, and such the connexion in which the parable under consideration is found.

There is still one part of the general scope of our Saviour's discourses, to which we have not yet attended, but which equally merits a careful examination. It is the *subsequent* context; or that part of our Saviour's discourse which follows this parable, and in which we shall see that the same important object is kept in view, and the same subject variously illustrated.

Let it be remarked, our Saviour had not completed his journey, when he delivered the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. He was still on his way

towards Jerusalem ; the account of which is continued, as was before noticed, to the 45th verse of the 19th chapter,—where we are told of his arriving at, and going into the temple. I must still expect your attention and patience whilst we briefly, yet carefully, observe some of the most important particulars contained in this part of the context. They cannot fail to throw strong additional light upon the main subject of our inquiry.

You recollect, my hearers, that the 16th chapter closes with the text, which is also the conclusion of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. “If they hear not Moses and the prophets,” &c. Do you remember how the next chapter begins? Perhaps not. But we shall see at once, on adverting to it, that it is not the commencement of a new discourse, but presents a continuance of our Saviour’s instructions at the *same* time : for it begins with the word “*then*,”—namely, on *that* occasion. “Then said he unto the disciples, it is impossible but that offences will come : but woe unto him, (or alas for him,) through whom they come ! It were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.”

At the 20th verse, the evangelist states that “when he was demanded of the pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation.” That is, scrupulous observation will not be necessary to discern it. “Neither shall they say, Lo here, or lo there ! For behold the kingdom of God is within you,”—or in the *midst* of you ; so that ye need not go abroad in

search of it. This kingdom of God was publicly revealed, and publicly proclaimed by our Saviour, and his apostles, and confirmed by many incontestable miracles, publicly wrought in the midst of them.

Our Saviour then adverts again to a subject which we cannot help observing was almost constantly in his mind, and uppermost in his thoughts, to wit: the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, and the calamities that were coming upon the Jewish nation. Alluding to the former of these, he says, "As the lightning that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven;"—or, as St. Matthew describes it, "as the lightning cometh out of the *east*, and shineth even unto the *west*, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Upon this, Dr. Clarke comments as follows: "It is worthy of remark, that our Lord, in the most particular manner, points out the very *march* of the Roman army: they entered into Judea on the **EAST**, and carried on their conquest **WESTWARD**; as if, not only the *extensiveness* of the ruin, but the very *route* which the army would take, were intended in the comparison of the *lightning issuing from the east, and shining to the west.*"

Our Saviour then makes a comparison between that approaching ruin, and the former destruction of the old world, in the days of Noe,—and that of Sodom in the time of Lot;—and says, "even thus shall it be, in the day when the Son of man is revealed,"—when the truth of his declarations shall be made manifest, in the complete accomplishment of the events predicted by him. Some one present, on hearing these calamities described, says, "Where Lord?" (in what *place*.)

will these dreadful evils fall? "And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body, the carcass is, thither will the eagles be gathered together." "The Roman armies, (says Dr. Clarke,) whose banners bore the figure of an eagle,—were the commissioned devourers."

In the next chapter also, our Saviour's discourse is continued. He delivers the parable of the unjust judge, and the importunate widow; and that of the pharisee and publican. He receives and blesses little children; and predicts his own sufferings and death, which were to be accomplished at Jerusalem. He advances with his disciples towards the devoted city, and restores a blind man to sight, who sat by the wayside begging. He proceeds on his journey. He enters and passes through Jericho, which is said to be about nineteen miles eastward from Jerusalem. He is thronged by a multitude. Zaccheus, the publican, climbs into a sycamore tree, to obtain a sight of him as he passed. Jesus calls him down, and goes with him to his house; at which, as usual, the pharisees murmured,—“saying, that he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.” To which Jesus replied,—“The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

But behold! the divine teacher has nearly completed his *last journey*. He is approaching that fatal city, which, with her magnificent temple, David had described as the “joy of the whole earth;” and of which, with devout gratitude he had said, “God is well known in her palaces, as a sure refuge.” To this, now degenerate and corrupt city, Jesus,—the deeply conscious Jesus,—is drawing near: and the evangelist says, “he added and spake a parable, *because* he was nigh to

Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear."

They probably anticipated that on his arrival at Jerusalem, he would immediately take upon himself *royal* authority, and commence a victorious temporal reign; an idea concerning the Messiah, with which, even the disciples were strangely infatuated.

But what is the parable, which, on this occasion, he spake? It is that of the nobleman and his ten servants. The whole of it is very interesting; but it is sufficient for our present purpose to notice its general tenor, and its application. The parable represents a certain nobleman, as going into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return; and calling his ten servants, he delivered them ten pounds, and directed them to occupy till he should come. But the account says, "his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us."

The general design of this parable can scarcely be mistaken. The nobleman evidently refers to our Saviour. The citizens who hated him, and rejected his authority, were his inveterate enemies, the persecuting Jews; concerning whom, the application is remarkable, and should be particularly noted. "But those, mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me." Meaning, as Dr. Clarke interprets it, the Jews who were shortly to be slain "by the sword of the Romans."

Then, says the evangelist, "When He (Jesus) had thus spoken, he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem." They arrive at the Mount of Olives. The disciples rejoice—the multitude shout hozannas to the son

of David, "the king that cometh in the name of the Lord ; peace in heaven, and glory in the highest." The envious pharisees murmur, and desire the Master to rebuke his disciples. He answered and said unto them, in language highly figurative and emphatical, "I tell you, that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out."

But see ! they are within sight of Jerusalem ; and Jesus, the all-compassionate Jesus, beheld the city and *wept*. Its awful fate, its incomparable carnage, its speedily approaching devastation and ruin, are in full prophetic view before him, and he *weeps*. Yes, God's Messiah—his beloved Son—man's Redeemer—the world's great Saviour, *weeps* at the sad prospect of human woe !—of mortal suffering !—for he was made like unto his brethren, and took part with flesh and blood.

But why did Jesus weep at beholding that superb city, with its lofty temple, that monument of Israel's glory ? Was it the prospect of his own sufferings and crucifixion, which he knew were very soon to be accomplished there ? No ; it was not for *himself*, or on his own account, that his heart sickened, and as it were, melted within him. Was it then a view of the tremendous destiny of *immortal souls*, the souls of Jerusalem's untoward children, of Judah's rebellious sons and daughters, in a *future state*, which moved the compassion, and excited the deep regret of this man of sorrows and sympathy—this prophet of Nazareth in Galilee ? No ; not an intimation of the kind is given. If there had been any room for such an awful apprehension—had he been aware of any danger of that sort—would he have been silent about it, in view of this speedily approaching crisis ? The supposition is inadmissible.

But, what is the occasion of his overflowing grief? The faithful record discloses the reason, and tells the mournful tale. "When he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes."

He continues the prophetic description: "For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side."—Ah, my hearers, observe how very particular is this divinely prophetic description; and how literal and exact was its fulfilment. The Jewish historian, Josephus, gives a particular account of this *trench* and the building of the wall; which, he says, was effected in *three days*, though it was not less than thirty-nine furlongs in circumference. And when this wall and trench were completed, the Jews were so enclosed on every side, that no person could escape out of the city, and no provision could be brought in; so that they were reduced to the most terrible distress by the *famine* which ensued.

Our Saviour closes the appalling description by saying—"And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knowest not the time of thy visitation."

Here is no room for mistake or conjecture. The destruction of Jerusalem, and the calamities of the Jewish people, form the subject; and the events, prophetically delineated, relate to *this world only*, without the slightest reference to scenes in a future state. In one other place in this gospel, the description is still more particular, and in relation to the Jews, extends

the prediction still further. It is as follows: "There shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

We have now done with our inquiry into the context of the parable which forms the subject of these Lectures. We have carefully examined its connexion with what precedes and follows it. We have traced the Saviour, step by step, through the whole of his last journey from Galilee up to Jerusalem. We have seen him with his disciples, and often surrounded by multitudes; unweariedly pursuing the great business of his mission, communicating his heavenly instructions, and declaring the divine counsels and purposes concerning mankind.

It can hardly fail to have been observed, that there was *one* subject in particular, to which he referred, in his discourses, more frequently and with greater emphasis than to any other. Indeed, we have seen that He almost constantly adverted to it, and dwelt upon it as a principal topic. It was the corruption, the infidelity and perverse obstinacy of the Jewish nation, instigated by their priests and rulers—their degeneracy and vile hypocrisy—their persecution and intolerance—their rejection of the Messiah and his gospel—their certain and speedily approaching ruin—the destruction of the city and temple by the Roman army—the unparalleled slaughter and devastation which would take place, and which would fully justify that divine declaration, "These be the days of vengeance!"

In addition to these events and the entire subversion of the Jewish system, political and religious, Jesus plainly foretold the reception of the Gospel by the Gentile nations, and the establishment of the Christian church, in the riches of its grace, among them. And this divine prophet plainly foretold that the Jews would remain in their dispersion, their blindness, and their degradation, until "the times of the Gentiles should be fulfilled," and they, in all their fulness be gathered, like the lost sheep, into the gospel fold of the great Shepherd; or, to use the language of our parable, into "Abraham's bosom."

Now, we have seen, my hearers, that the parable of the rich man and Lazarus is found in the midst of these discourses of our Saviour, containing the above noticed descriptions, declarations, parables and predictions. It stands, we say, in the *midst* of them. Can we reasonably suppose that in this close connexion, this *one* parable should be upon a subject, and have an application entirely different from all the rest of his discourses and teachings, during this his last journey to Jerusalem, where his ministry and his life were to be closed by a cruel and ignominious death.

Can we, I repeat, rationally suppose that this one parable contains an entirely distinct and unconnected representation of circumstances and events, not once intimated or alluded to, either before or after it? The supposition is most unreasonable.

Take particular notice: The law and the prophets, says our Saviour, were *until John*. Then the Jewish institution, or covenant of the law, was to be no longer of binding force or obligation; which our Saviour figuratively illustrates by an allusion to the marriage

covenant. And then immediately follows the parable which is our subject ; the meaning and design of which, we think, will now be fairly understood, and the interpretation appear natural and consistent.

We shall not have time, in this Lecture, to proceed far in what we regard as the only correct illustration of the parable. But we will commence it.

“ There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day.” Are any of my hearers *now* at a loss to understand who this rich man was? Or rather, what was intended to be represented by this parabolical statement? I think not. I anticipate your reply. By the rich man here, must be meant the house of Israel, or the Jewish people, as is evident from the connexion of the passage, and from the whole tenor of the description. The Jews were a *wealthy* people, possessing a rich and fertile country, according to the declaration of Moses :—“ The Lord thy God, (says he) bringeth thee into a good land ; a land of brooks, of water, of fountains, and depths that spring out of valleys and hills ; a land of wheat and barley, and vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates ; a land of oil-olive and honey ; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it.”—He also speaks of the multiplying of their flocks and herds, and silver and gold, &c.

Now this was the *rich man* ; or these were the people, parabolically represented by the rich man. Nor is it singular that they should be described in the character of a *single individual*. This is often done in their own writings. Thus, by the prophet Hosea, the Lord says, “ When Israel was a *child*, then I loved

him, and called my *Son* out of Egypt." And hence again, Moses says, "For the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about,—he made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields;—butter of kine, and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs," &c.

These, with many other instances that might be cited, show that the Israelites,—the posterity of the patriarchs—are set forth in the scriptures, in the character of an *individual*. This nation of the Jews, then, we understand to be intended, and in the parable designated by the rich man.

It should also be observed that the Jews were not only rich in *temporal* good things, but also in *religious* distinctions and immunities. They had, as the apostle shows, "much the advantage every way: chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God;"—a divine revelation of his will, which was a favor beyond what had been conferred on any other people. Moses alludes to this where he says, "Behold I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me.—Keep, therefore, and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law which I set before you this day?"—"The eternal God is thy

refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. Happy art thou, O Israel : who is like unto thee, a people saved by the Lord ; the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency."

St. Paul sums up their religious advantages in the following statement :—" Who are Israelites ; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises ; whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed, (or God be blessed,) forever, Amen."

Here, my brethren, is the rich man,—the Israel of God,—His chosen, peculiar, and highly favored people.

But this rich man is said to have been " clothed in *purple*, and *fine linen*."—And is not this also a fit representation of *Israel* of old ? Is not the description indeed very exact, and the figure remarkably true to the original ? Let me give you a few scripture extracts relative to this particular. Hear the prophet Ezekiel, speaking in the name of the Lord, in reference to Israel. " I clothed thee also with broided work, and shod thee with badger's skin, and I girded thee about with fine *linen*, and I covered thee with *silk*,—thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom."

Hear also the description of Moses :—" And of the *blue*, and *purple*, and *scarlet*, they made clothes of service, to do service in the holy place, and made the holy garments for Aaron, as the Lord commanded Moses."—The curtains of the *tabernacle* also were directed to be made of " fine twined linen, and blue and purple."

Here then, again, we see the *rich man* in the parable, clothed in purple and fine linen. And, moreover, it is added, that he “fared sumptuously every day.”

This also was eminently true of Israel, the ancient people of God. They had given to them, a land flowing with milk and honey. Neither did they live by bread alone or bodily food ; but they were privileged to feed upon the word of God, and upon the divine promises of good things to come, made unto the fathers, and “spoken by the mouth of all God’s holy prophets, since the world began :” so that well might they be represented as “faring sumptuously every day.”

But I must close this Lecture. And, my hearers, I cannot but think you must see a fitness and consistency in this view of the parable, thus far presented. You must be satisfied, we believe, that the rich man means the house of Israel.

The illustration of the subsequent parts, will, we trust, greatly strengthen this conviction, and we hope and believe, will not be less interesting than the preceding part of the investigation. You will perceive that, according to the order of the parable, our next inquiry will be, who was the beggar?—or whom was he intended to designate? And may this already protracted examination lead us, in the issue, to the correct understanding of this very important portion of the divine instructions and predictions, delivered by the prophet of Nazareth, the appointed Redeemer of men, and the Saviour of the world. Amen.

LECTURE VIII.

LUKE xvi. 31.

“ If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”

I TRUST it was satisfactorily shown, in the last Lecture, that the rich man in the parable designated the house of Israel, or nation of the Jews. He is represented as being wealthy, richly clothed, and sumptuously fed: a description remarkably adapted to the condition of that highly favored and flourishing people, whilst under the peculiar protection of the Almighty, with his glory in the midst of them. We come now to consider the account of a very different character, set forth in the parable under the degrading appellation of a beggar. “ And there was a certain beggar, named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table ; moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores.” Such is the description of the deplorable condition of the beggar. Our present inquiry is, Who was this beggar ?

It has, we think, been clearly shown that this account is not to be taken literally, as a historical statement of facts and circumstances ; but that it is a *parable*, and, like many other of the parables of our Saviour, it is highly *prophetic*.

The rich man, we have seen, very fitly represents

the *Jews*. Can there be any doubt that the beggar denotes the *Gentile* nations? We think not. In a moral view, especially, *they* were poor indeed, and miserably degraded. They are described as "sitting in darkness, and in the region and shadow of death,"—as being "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world."

In this view of the parable before us, it corresponds with many other of our Saviour's parables; which, as we have before noticed, were evidently intended to exhibit in contrast, the different condition of the Jews and Gentiles, and prophetically to set forth the future divine dispensations towards them respectively. One parable, in particular, occurs to me, which is so full to this point, and the application so direct, that I cannot forbear citing it. It is the parable of the householder, and his vineyard. "There was, (says our Saviour,) a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a wine-press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants more than the first, and they did unto them likewise. But last of all, he sent unto them his son, saying, they will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the

lord, therefore, of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which will render him the fruits in their season." And now mark our Saviour's application of this parable. "Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, the stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner : this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone, shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."

Now there is no room for dispute, as to the meaning of this parable; our Saviour has explained it in his application of it. This he did not usually do, but left his hearers to discover the design and the proper application of his parables, from their connexion and their general tenor. And it is in this way that we arrive at what we believe to be the true meaning of the parable, which we are endeavoring to illustrate. We understand it to be a figurative or allegorical description of the state and condition of the two great divisions of mankind—the Jews and Gentiles; and a prophetic exhibition of important changes and events which awaited them, as set forth in many other of our Saviour's parables and discourses.

It may be proper here to notice, that this view of the parable is not wholly without countenance from others, besides Universalists. Theophylact, of the eleventh century, was Metropolitan of Bulgaria. He

wrote a Commentary on the Four Gospels, in which, among other observations upon the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, he remarks as follows: "But this parable can also be explained in the way of *allegory*; so that we may say that by the rich man is signified the Jewish people. For they were formerly rich, abounding in all divine knowledge, wisdom and instruction, which are more excellent than gold and precious stones. And they were arrayed in purple and fine linen, as they possessed a kingdom and a priesthood, and were themselves a royal priesthood to God. The *purple*, denoted their *kingdom*; and the *fine linen*, their *priesthood*; for the Levites were clothed in sacerdotal vestments of fine linen; and they fed sumptuously and lived splendidly, every day. But Lazarus was the *Gentile* people; poor in divine grace and wisdom, and lying before the *gates*: for it was not permitted to the Gentiles to enter the house itself, because they were considered a pollution—Moreover, those people were full of fetid sores of sin," &c.

To the above extract, I would add a short one from another writer, (James Pate, M. A. Rector of Deptford) not supposed to have been a Universalist; but whose views of the parable, as to its general design, are in accordance with the above. He says as follows: "We will suppose, then, the rich man who fared so sumptuously to be the *Jew*; so amply enriched with the heavenly treasure of divine revelation. The poor beggar who lay at his gate, in so miserable a plight, was the poor *Gentile*; now reduced to the last degree of want, in regard to religious knowledge. The crumbs which fell from the rich man's table, and

which the beggar was so desirous of picking up, were such fragments of patriarchal and Jewish traditions as their travelling philosophers were able to pick up, with their utmost care and diligence ; and those philosophers were also the dogs that licked the sores of heathenism, and endeavored to supply the wants of divine revelation, by such schemes and hypotheses concerning the nature of the gods, and the obligation of moral duties, as (due allowance being made for their ignorance and frailties) did no small honor to human nature, and yet thereby plainly showed, how little a way, unassisted reason could go, without some supernatural help," &c.

The explanation which this writer gives of the *crumbs*, said to fall from the rich man's table, and also of the *dogs* that licked the beggar's sores, we consider as mere speculation ; for it may well be doubted whether those circumstances were intended to have any specific reference ; or whether they were not rather thrown into the figurative description, for the purpose of giving additional effect to the lamentable case of want and wretchedness, exhibited under the image of a destitute, diseased, and helpless beggar. But the *general* view of the parable contained in this extract, and also in the one preceding, we are satisfied is the correct one ; and we have made the quotations, to show that some orthodox writers have understood the parable agreeably to our ideas ; and have explained and applied it according to the interpretation generally given by Universalists.

But why is it then,—it may naturally be inquired,—that, with very few exceptions, no other preachers and theological authors, besides those of the Universalist denomination, expound or apply the parable in

this way? In reply, we observe, that there are two reasons which may be assigned for it, and we think of no other. They are, we apprehend, the following: Either those preachers and writers have not carefully noticed the *context* of this parable, and the general subject and aim of our Saviour's discourse, in which it is contained—so necessary to a correct and consistent exposition of it. Or else it is because they are aware that any other interpretation of this important passage, than that which is commonly given of it, would lessen the amount, and materially weaken the force of the evidence usually adduced in support of a doctrine, which appears to be regarded as the most necessary, and the most salutary of all *Christian* doctrines—that of *endless torments* in a future state. And, on this account, they are willing the commonly received opinion of the passage should be retained, correct or incorrect.

From this digression, if such it should be considered, we return to the further illustration of the subject. By the beggar, then, we understand to be intended the Gentile nations,—fitly represented in another parable, as being far from their father's house, feeding on husks, and perishing with hunger.

“And it came to pass, (says the parable,) that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.” The meaning of this, in reference to the Gentiles, evidently is, that they *died* to their heathenish state of idolatry and superstition,—were delivered from their degraded condition of ignorance,—of gloomy servile fears, and almost hopeless wretchedness; in which state they were, as the apostle says, “without strength,”—without support or consolation,—“carried away unto dumb idols,”—“lying vanities,

which cannot profit,"—which can only be a “shame and a reproach.” But when the “kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared,”—was *manifested* to these Gentiles, they were *saved*, delivered from this desolate and wretched state,—“not by works of righteousness which they had done, but according to God’s mercy ;—that being justified by his grace, they should be made heirs, according to the hope of eternal life.”

The beggar being carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom, represents the conversion of the Gentiles, through the ministry of the apostles and their successors to the faith of the gospel—that gospel which the apostle says, was “preached before unto Abraham.” And we find, on recurring to the passage, that this was spoken with a direct reference to the *heathen*, or Gentiles. It is in the third chapter of Galatians, as follows: “Know ye therefore, that they, which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the *heathen* through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.” And again,—“That the blessing of Abraham (meaning the blessing promised to Abraham,) might come on the *Gentiles* through Jesus Christ ;” that is, through the preaching of the gospel by the apostles and their successors, entitled *angels*, or messengers. And hence, St. Paul tells us, that unto him was this grace given, that he should “preach among the *Gentiles*, the unsearchable riches of Christ.”

The phrase, *Abraham’s bosom*, therefore, is a figurative expression, denoting the faith of Abraham, and the blessings of the gospel dispensation, into which, on

its being rejected by the Jews, the Gentiles were called. Agreeably to which, Paul and Barnabas testified to the envious, contradicting, and blasphemous Jews at Antioch, saying,—“It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you : but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord.”

Now these Gentiles *died* to their heathenish principles and practices ; and, according to the spirit and meaning of what is said of the beggar in the parable, they were carried by the *angels*—by these two angels, or *messengers*, Paul and Silas, and their successors in the gospel ministry—into Abraham’s bosom,—into the faith and the blessedness of that gospel dispensation, which was revealed and preached unto Abraham. Under the same figure, and evidently in the same sense, our Saviour declared, saying,—“Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven,”—obviously meaning the gospel state, with its privileges and blessings ; because it is immediately added—“But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness.”

Here, then, we see the Gentiles, (denoted by the beggar,) in the *kingdom of heaven*—the *gospel church*, which is represented by being in the bosom of Abraham ; that is, in the enjoyment of his *faith*, and of the inestimable privileges, promises, and hopes, contained

in the gracious covenant divinely made with that ancient patriarch; and embracing, in its ample provisions, all the nations and families of the earth.

We have done, for the present, with the beggar; and I cannot but think you must be satisfied that the illustration we have given, and the application we have made of this character in the parable, corresponds with its general design, and is unquestionably correct.

We return to notice again, the rich man. He also, says the parable, "died and was buried." We have before observed, and made it appear, we think, very evident, that the rich man denotes the Jewish people. In this view, his death and burial are clearly to be referred to the entire abolition of the Jewish system, political and religious; which, at the time of the introduction of the Christian dispensation, was, as the apostle says, *decaying* and *waxing old*, and was "ready to vanish away."

"The rich man"—says one of the orthodox writers, before quoted,—“dies, what we call a *political* death. His *dispensation* ceases. He is rejected from being any longer the peculiar son of God. The people whom he parabolically represents, are miserably destroyed by the Romans, and the wretched remains of them driven into exile over the face of the earth; mere *vagabonds*; with a kind of mark set upon them, like Cain, their prototype; for a like crime,—and which mark may, perhaps, be their adherence to the law. Whereby it came amazingly to pass, that these people, though dispersed, yet still dwell alone; *not being reckoned among the nations*, as Balaam foretold.”

Another orthodox writer, before quoted, says to the same effect,—“The rich man died *politically*. He lost his riches, his purple and fine linen, his government, his city, and his existence as a body politic.” He was *buried*, shut out from the light, and shrouded in darkness. “The poor man died to darkness, (came forth to gospel light and liberty,) and therefore he is not said to be *buried*.”

The rich man, lifting up his eyes in hell, being in torments, is to be understood as a metaphorical and forcible representation of the various calamities, grievous privations, and deep distresses of the Jews; in striking fulfilment of the declaration of our Saviour, in another place, parallel to one before quoted. “There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. And behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.”

You doubtless recollect, my hearers, that in one of the preceding Lectures we dwelt largely, and very particularly upon the word *hell*, where it occurs in the scriptures as derived from the original words *sheol* and *hades*. It was found that the most common meaning of the word was, the *grave*, or the *state of the dead* generally, without regard to their characters, or to their happiness or misery in a future state.

We noticed, however, that the word *hell* was sometimes employed to denote, figuratively, a state of great

anxiety, distress and trouble in the *present* life. It is so used by Jonah, in reference to his perilous situation in the deep. In the same sense it is employed by David, where he says, "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me : I found trouble and sorrow." And in another place, he praises God for his deliverance from the "*lowest* hell." It is in this figurative sense the word is to be understood in the parable. The rich man, denoting the ancient Israel of God, was in a hell of *disappointment, vexation* and *misery* ; and he has been in this hell of trouble and sorrow ever since. This is an important consideration, and deserves particular notice.

The Jews, as a people, nearly without exception, remain inveterately hostile to Christianity ; whilst, from the observance of their own rites and ceremonies, their legal sprinklings and purifications—long since abrogated—and destitute of the divine tokens of approbation,—they derive no drop of consolation to allay their constantly disappointed cravings.

When Jesus of Nazareth appeared, and entered on his public ministry, the Jews were confessedly looking out with great anxiety for their expected Messiah ; as they believed, according to the predictions of their prophets, the time for his appearance had arrived. *Him* they rejected ; and no other person has since appeared, in which their descendants perceive any of the characteristics of the promised Redeemer. To account for this seeming failure, has long been, and still continues to be, to the Jews, a very difficult and perplexing task. One of their Rabbies, (Samuel Maroccamas) in writing to his friend, near eight hundred years ago, has the following language :

“I would fain learn of thee, out of the testimonies of the law, and the prophets, and other scriptures, why the Jews are thus smitten in this captivity wherein we are; which may properly be called the perpetual anger of God, because it hath no end. For it is now above a thousand years since we were carried captive by Titus. And yet our fathers, who worshipped idols, killed the prophets, and cast the law behind their back, were punished only with a seventy years' captivity; and then brought home again. But now there is no end of our calamities; nor do the prophets promise any.”

Appropriate to this part of our subject, is the following extract from a modern English writer, (Thomas Gisborne) in his “Summary View of the History of the Jews.” “Their situation, (says he,) has in all ages been characterized by miracles. Their preservation is at this moment a standing miracle. The hostile tribes of invaders, who successively established themselves in Great Britain—discordant in religion and manners,—Saxons, Danes, and Normans—are all absorbed and lost in one common mass. The innumerable hosts of Pagan barbarians, who overwhelmed the Christian empire of Rome, speedily coalesced with the natives whom they had subdued—each host in the region where it settled—into one homogeneous assemblage. Faith and practice, laws and customs, even personal appearance and complexion, became similar, in the course of a very few centuries, among the victors and the vanquished.

Not so with the Jews. Scattered in small parcels throughout many nations; no where living under their own laws, and in few places indulged in the free exer-

cise of their religion ; urged by general contempt, and even in many Christian countries, by shameful oppression, to withdraw themselves from notice, by assimilating themselves to the natives among whom they dwell ; they have every where multiplied under affliction, and have every where continued a distinct and separate people. Why have they thus been exempted from the common fate of nations ? They have been exempted, that, after having exhibited to the inhabitants of the opposite extremities of the earth, a stupendous proof of the power and justice of God, they may be restored to the perpetual possession of their native land,"—or, in the language of the prophet, may "return (with all the rest of the redeemed) and come to Zion," or the *heavenly Jerusalem*, in the apostle's sense of that phrase,---when they "shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." But until that happy period—determined in the gracious, though unfathomable counsels of Heaven—shall arrive, they, to use the figurative language in the parable, must remain like the once rich man, *tormented in hell*, without a drop of the heavenly waters of gospel life and love, to cool or refresh them.

Our attention will again be called to this point, when we come to speak again of the great gulf named in the parable.

The rich man is next represented as calling upon father Abraham to compassionate the situation of his wretched son. "He cried, saying, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue for I am tormented in this flame."

In illustrating parables, it would not be judicious to seek for a concealed meaning, or for a moral or spiritual application, for every phrase or figure that may be employed in them. Their *general* sense and meaning should chiefly be inquired after; and this, we think, we have plainly discovered in this parable, in its reference to events and circumstances relative to the Jews and Gentiles. The rich man's calling upon Abraham, and addressing him as *father*, is worthy of note, because it is peculiarly characteristic of the Jewish people. They claimed Abraham as their common father, the great patriarch of their nation, and they greatly prided themselves in their illustrious progenitor, however careless they were to imitate his virtues, his faith, and his ready obedience to the divine will. Hence, John the Baptist said to them,—“Think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones, (alluding, it has been thought, to the Gentiles) to raise up children unto Abraham.” “Yes, (says a late annotator upon this part of the parable) they would be in favor with Abraham. They have disbelieved *Jesus*; they have abused their privileges; they have relied upon their national greatness, and the glory of their ancestors. When in distress, they turned to *Abraham* for mercy. But their national greatness is gone, and the glory of their ancestors can afford them no relief.”

Abraham is represented as recognizing the relationship; and he replies to the suppliant by the endearing appellation of *son*. “Son, remember,” &c. He reminds him of his own formerly prosperous condition, and also of what had been the unfavorable lot of the

beggar ; and intimates, that it was agreeable to the wisdom and equality of the divine proceedings that the scene should now be reversed, and an entire change take place in their relative situations.

“*Son,*” says the Patriarch. This does not sound much as if Abraham was addressing himself to an *infernal spirit*—an associate with horrid and blasphemous demons, in the tormenting flames of a never-ending hell. No ; far from it. He still recognizes and owns him as a son ; and by this, strongly intimates that however grievous his present punishment and sufferings, yet that he expected his ultimate deliverance and restoration. “*Son,* remember, that thou in thy lifetime, (alluding to the continuance in force, of the Jewish covenant or dispensation,) receivedst thy good things, (peculiar privileges and blessings,) and likewise Lazarus evil things ; (great disadvantages as to condition, means of improvement, and sources of enjoyment ;) but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.”

Father Abraham continues his reply to this now unhappy and ill-fated son. He is represented as saying—“*And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed ; so that they who would pass from us to you cannot ; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.*”

Now in order to come at the true meaning of the *great gulf* here spoken of, it is necessary to inquire who are the *us* and who the *you* here spoken of. We have already seen, according to the view we have taken of the parable, that the beggar represents the *Gentile* nations ; and his being in Abraham's bosom denotes that part of them which have been converted to the Christian faith. These converted Gentiles, then,

are in Abraham's bosom ; which phrase denotes the Christian covenant, or gospel dispensation. Those then who are signified by the term *us*, are the converted Gentiles, and these are on *one* side of the great gulf.

The rich man, we have seen, denotes the *Jews*, who, on account of their calamities, their banishment from their country, their dispersions, the contempt and scorn which they every where experience, their adherence to their abrogated law and ceremonial rites, are figuratively in a hell of trouble and sorrow. And to all these evils and discouragements may be added, their long disappointed expectations of a Messiah to deliver and restore their nation ; and the thick veil of darkness which covers their minds, causing them to stumble, and bow down, and grope in doubt, fear, and perplexity. On these accounts, we say, the Jews, signified by the rich man, may justly, though figuratively, be represented as in hell—in a state of suffering and torment. These, therefore, are they who are on the *other* side of this great gulf. So that the *anti-christian* Jews, and the *Christian* Gentiles, are on opposite sides of this gulf, and are thus separated by it.

That a remarkable separation has long existed, and still does exist between the Jews and Gentiles, admits of no doubt. Although many ages have past since the Jews forfeited their national prerogatives, and their distinguished character as the peculiar people of God, and have been dispersed among the nations of the earth ; yet they have never become united in feeling, manners and customs—especially not in religious feelings and devotional exercises—with any other people. What keeps them thus separate? We answer—it is

the *great gulf*, as stated in the parable. What then is this gulf? We answer—it is not any natural or physical obstruction; but it is of a mental or moral character, and relates more particularly to religious principles. In the Jews it may perhaps not improperly be denominated the gulf of an *inveterate prejudice*; an unyielding attachment to their own long venerated institutions, legal ceremonies, and traditional maxims; and an irreconcilable enmity and opposition to every other system or principle, moral or religious. And especially it is a deep-rooted hostility to the name of Jesus of Nazareth, and the gospel or Christian dispensation which owns him for its founder. This obstinate prejudice and infidelity of the Jews, in relation to Christianity, prevents the Christian Gentiles in particular from any effectual access to them.

They would gladly go, even from Abraham's bosom, to these wretched people, represented by the rich man in torments. Yes, Gentile Christians would fain go, to convey to them the gospel message of salvation and peace, and joy unspeakable; but this great gulf of *prejudice, unbelief, and obstinacy*, in the Jews, prevents their going among them with these glad tidings, to any good effect.

My brethren, is not this an obvious fact? and has it not been verified from the days of our Saviour down to the present time? What exertions have been made of late years, especially in England, in behalf of the Jews. Societies have been formed, and hundreds of thousands of dollars have been contributed and expended, for the express object of the conversion of the Jews to Christianity. But what has been effected?

It appears, by all the information obtained, that the enterprise has utterly failed, and all exertions for the object have proved entirely abortive. What is the reason? It is, we are persuaded, because the *great gulf* is fixed between them, and remains an insuperable obstacle to the success of the enterprise, and of all those benevolent exertions.

Nor will we conceal our full conviction, that this gulf of separation between the Jews and Gentiles, in relation to the Christian religion, is consistent with, and even agreeable to, the eternal purpose of God, who, however mysteriously to us, worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. His counsel shall stand; and in the grand result, will be seen to have been infinitely wise and benevolent. All intelligences shall be constrained to acknowledge and adore it.

We inquire then—and the inquiry is exceedingly interesting—Will this great gulf ever be removed, so that there will be nothing to hinder persons—or these different portions of the human family—from passing and repassing, and mingling together in harmony? Or shall this fearful gulf, this insuperable obstruction, continue forever? Our brethren of other denominations contend earnestly for the faith of the latter position. We have long been told that this great gulf is to be perpetuated to all eternity. It has been represented as a broad and horrid chasm, deep and large, fixed by a God of inexorable vengeance, to prevent poor damned souls from escaping out of hell, and passing over into heaven! I doubt not but the most of you, my hearers, are ready to bear me witness this evening, that you have often heard it stated from the pulpit, with great concern, and as a salutary warning—that the un-

happy sufferers in the future world of wo could never escape from their torments, because of the tremendous *gulf* that had been fixed, and would always remain, rendering deliverance impossible.

We trust, however, that it has been conclusively shown in these Lectures, that no such doctrine is taught, or was intended in the parable,—that its reference is to the present life *only* ; and to circumstances and events which have occurred, and which are yet to take place, in the dispensations of Divine Providence towards those two distinct divisions of mankind—the Jews and Gentiles. — But will not this great gulf ever be removed? Or, to drop the figure, will the obstacles to the union, intercourse, and religious agreement and harmony of these two different classes of people, never be done away?

We answer, yes ; of which the sacred writings—the faithful word of prophecy—very explicitly assures us. Indeed, what less than this can be understood by that declaration of our Saviour: “Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold ; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice ; and there shall be ONE FOLD, UNDER ONE SHEPHERD.” Out of abundance of testimony that might be brought forward fully to this point, I will further, at present, cite but *two* other passages,—one by a prophet, and another by an apostle. The first is in the prophecy of Isaiah, 11th and 12th chapters, as follows: “And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots ; and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him ; the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the

spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord—with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the *Gentiles* seek; and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time, to recover the remnant of His people which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah, from the four corners of the earth. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim.—And the Lord shall utterly destroy the tongue of the

Egyptian sea ; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams thereof, and make men go over dry shod. And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee : though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me. Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid ; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song ; he also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. And in that day shall ye say, Praise the Lord, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted. Sing unto the Lord, for he hath done excellent things ; this is known *in all the earth*. Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion ; for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee."

I must be excused for this long quotation. You cannot but see that it is exceedingly appropriate to our subject, and that it contemplates a union and concord between Jews and Gentiles, utterly inconsistent with the continuance of this great gulf of separation.

I must now cite you the confident declaration of an inspired and enraptured apostle, to the same point. It is in the 11th of Romans. "I say then, hath God cast away his people ? God forbid. God hath not cast away his people (the Jewish people) which he foreknew." He then speaks of their apostacy, and blindness, their stumbling, &c. and then again he asks, "Have they stumbled that they should fall ? God forbid : but rather through their fall, salvation is come to the Gentiles, for to provoke them (the Jews) to jealousy, (or emulation). Now, if the fall of them

be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them be the riches of the Gentiles ; how much more their fulness?—For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead ? For if the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy ; and if the root be holy, so are the branches.”—A statement full of important meaning.

After several other arguments, comparisons and inferences, the apostle thus proceeds : “ For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits.” What is this mystery ? He tells us “ that blindness in part has happened to Israel.” How long is this blindness to continue ? He tells us, “ until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.” It is in vain, then, to attempt the conversion of the Jews to the Christian faith, before this *set period*. All the societies that can be raised for the purpose, and all the exertions that can be made, must be in vain until this predicted event shall be fulfilled. The blindness of the Jews will still remain, until the *fulness of the Gentiles be come in*.—“ And so (continues the apostle) all Israel shall be saved.” Ah, then the great gulf of separation will no longer intervene—no longer remain.

But is this conversion and salvation of the Jews *certain* ?—and how will it be effected ? Yes ; it is as sure as the eternal purpose and veracity of God can make it ; and the apostle tells us how it will be accomplished : “ As it is written, (says he) there shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.” And that we may fully rely upon it, he says,—“ For this is my covenant unto them,

when I shall take away their sins. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy, they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief,"—For what purpose? That he might damn them all, or any part of them? No; but "that he might have mercy upon all."

The apostle is overwhelmed with the infinite, and adorable subject. He exclaims, in astonishment and rapture,—“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again? For of him, and through him, and to him are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen.”

To what a glorious conclusion does the apostle bring his subject concerning the divine dispensations towards the Jews and Gentiles; and which he shows are to result in the *salvation of them all*—to the glory of God forever!

Even the orthodox commentator, Dr. Clarke, is a complete Universalist in his remarks upon this passage. He says—“For OF Him as the original Designer and Author; and BY Him as the prime and efficient Cause; and TO Him as the ultimate End, for the manifestation of his eternal glory and goodness, *are all things in universal nature* through the whole compass of *time and eternity*. And let Him have the praise of all His works, from the hearts and mouths of all His intelli-

gent creatures *forever*, throughout all the generations of men." " *Amen*, so be it : let this be established forever ! "

Here we conclude the present Lecture. We are still not entirely through with our illustration of the parable. We expect to finish it, however, and close the whole, perhaps, with a brief recapitulation in the next Lecture. And may the divine wisdom and goodness guide and govern us always, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

LECTURE IX.

LUKE xvi. 31.

“If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”

IN giving our own views of the meaning and application of the parable of which the text is the conclusion, we finished the last Lecture with a particular illustration of a remarkable, and very significant figure introduced in it,—that of a *great gulf*, said to have been fixed between the two parties,—Abraham and those with him, described as being in his *bosom*; and the rich man and *his* associates, represented as being tormented in *hell*. We have never seen any other satisfactory explanation of the great gulf, and we believe no other can be given, consistently with the general scope and design of the parable.

The next verses still further express the wretched condition of the rich man; and withal, his anxious desire that his family relatives might be mercifully preserved from his tremendous destiny; a representation utterly inconsistent, as we have before shown, with the ideas commonly entertained of lost souls in a future state, divested, as they are supposed to be, of every principle of compassion, and filled with despair, revenge and fury. He entreats the father of nations to send Lazarus to his father's house; for, says he, “I

have five brethren ; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.”

I do not suppose it necessary to consider the number *five* here stated, as being particularly important, any more than it is in another parable where the same number is twice mentioned,—namely, in the parable of the ten virgins, *five* of which, are said to have been wise, and *five* foolish ; or than is the number *ten* in the parable of the nobleman, who is represented, on his being about to go into a far country, as calling his *ten* servants, and delivering them ten pounds, with which to occupy, or trade until he should return.

The meaning, in either of these supposed cases, does not at all depend upon the *number* of the virgins, or of the servants, or of the brethren.

The particular design of this part of the parable, may be learned, as I conceive, from the answer of father Abraham to the request of the rich man in relation to his brethren, or kindred. In the application made, there seems to be an intimation conveyed by this anxious petitioner, that the evidence already afforded was not sufficient to convince his countrymen, the five brethren, of the reality of those threatened evils, the truth of which *he* was unable any longer to doubt, being taught by sad experience ; and he suggests that clearer and more direct testimony would certainly effect their repentance and conversion.

Abraham replies :—“ They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them.” As much as if he had said, The writings of Moses and the prophets are fully sufficient for their instruction and admonition, in all things which it concerns them to know and practise, in order to their well-being and prosperity. Let them

duly attend to the revelation already given them, and be obedient to the precepts enjoined therein, and they will be safe, prosperous, and happy. "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them."

The rich man still urges his objection, and presses his request. "Nay, father Abraham; but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent." To which the patriarch *definitively* replies,—“If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”

In this reply, some important considerations are suggested; namely, that the scriptures of the Old Testament, the writings of Moses and the prophets, contain all needful instruction and warning, and sufficient evidence of their divine authenticity; and that, if duly attended to, they would be to the Jews, not only a safeguard against all imposture and delusion, but also prepare them for the reception of the Messiah, and for their introduction into the gospel state or dispensation,—that blessed state which their pious ancestor desired to see, and by faith did see, “and was glad.”

The Jewish dispensation was, doubtless, calculated to prepare the way for the introduction and establishment of this gospel state. St. Paul is very particular and explicit upon this point. Hence to the Galatians he says, “Before faith came,”—that is, before the grace of the gospel was revealed and published,—“we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith, (the Christian faith, or religion of Christ,) which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore, the law was our school-master,”—(our governor and instructor,) to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, (after the gospel

dispensation, or reign of the Messiah is published,) we are no longer under a school-master." The law is *then* no longer in force. It is abolished, having answered the end for which it was instituted; which was to bring us to Christ, or into the Christian covenant. Agreeably to this, the same Apostle saith to the Hebrews,—“For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which, we draw nigh unto God.”

And hence, again, he represents Christ, on his coming into the world, as saying, “Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure therein. Then said he, Lo, I come, in the volume of the book (the scriptures of the Old Testament,) it is written of me, to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second; by the which *will*, we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all.”

The writings of Moses and the prophets, therefore, contained not only a sufficient code of laws and instructions to direct and govern the Jews in every part of their duty under that dispensation; but they also abounded with express predictions, and very particular descriptions of the Messiah, who was to be a descendant of their nation, of the tribe of Judah, and house of David.

In the first book of their scriptures by Moses, we find the Messiah promised in *general* terms, as the “seed of the *woman* that should bruise the serpent’s head.” In the same book he is more definitely promised, as “the *seed of Abraham*, in whom all nations and

families of the earth should be blessed." And in the patriarch Jacob's dying benediction to his sons, he prophetically declared, saying,—“The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until *Shiloh* come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.” The Jews acknowledge this to be an express prediction of the coming of the Messiah; and it is wonderful, that although they cannot but be sensible that the sceptre and law-giver have long since departed from their nation; and that, as foretold by the prophet Hosea, (3d ch. 4th v.) they have now for a long time been “without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim,”—without any thing like regal or sacerdotal authority or pre-eminence; yet that they do not perceive, and will not be persuaded that the Messiah must have already come, according to the plain language of the prediction,—but still vainly look for the appearance of this divinely promised Shiloh. Surely, as the apostle says, “blindness in part”—and indeed in a very great degree—“has happened unto Israel.” And, as noticed in the last Lecture, thus will this blindness remain, “until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.”

Moses, in prophetic reference to the Messiah, declared to the Jews—“A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.” And now mark also the fearful threatening accompanying this prediction:—“And it shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.”

This is a quotation by St. Peter, as recorded in the 3d of Acts, and to which he immediately adds—"Yea, and all the prophets, from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days,"—the days of the abolition of the Jewish system, and of the reign of the Messiah in his gospel.

Well might Jesus say to the unbelieving and perverse Jews,—“Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me.” And well also, might father Abraham reply to the rich man’s request in behalf of his brethren—the same people,—“They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them.” And “If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”

But it should not, and need not be concealed, that the reason assigned by the rich man in hell, for his great anxiety and fervent intercession in behalf of his brethren, was, “lest *they* also should come into that place of *torment*.” And in this view, Abraham’s answer to the request, and his referring these brethren to Moses and the prophets, seem strongly to intimate that *their writings* contain every thing necessary for their information, warning and counsel upon this subject; otherwise there would be no propriety in such reference.

But have Moses and the prophets said any thing about *hell torments*, of which the Jewish people, or any others were in danger? This inquiry was suggested in our 5th Lecture, and to which we then replied as follows: “That although Moses and the prophets have said nothing about a hell of torments for

the souls or bodies of men in a future state of existence,—nor once intimated that any human being was ever in danger of such torments, or of any sufferings beyond the present life; yet they have said much which prophetically relates to the condition of the rich man in hell—or rather, to the true meaning of this parabolical description.” What this is, which Moses and the prophets have thus figuratively predicted in relation to the Jews, it is now the proper place to examine.

It has before been shown, we trust conclusively, that the rich man, in the parable, means the Jewish nation; and that the term *hell*, employed in it, is to be taken *figuratively*, as denoting great calamities and troubles; a state of deep degradation and misery in *this* world. Now, concerning such a state, and such temporal calamities, troubles and distresses, the writings of Moses and the prophets, with very particular reference to the Jews, are far from being silent. Their predictions and warnings are ample and specific; and the application of them express and definite. A few passages only will here be noticed, as examples, out of a very great number that might be cited, to the same effect.

Take the following, from the writings of Moses, in which the description is so particular and minute, that its intended application cannot be mistaken. It occurs in the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy, and is the substance of a long discourse, delivered to the Jewish people,—declaring, in prophetic language, the evils and miseries that would come upon them for their disobedience and rebellion. He says,—“It shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to do his commandments, &c. then all

these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee. Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field: the Lord shall send thee cursing, vexation and rebuke, until thou be destroyed." "The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies. Thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them; and thou shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth." And now mark, I entreat you, in describing these curses and calamities, how particularly he points out the siege, and the desolation of Jerusalem, as they actually took place. "The Lord (says he,) shall bring a nation upon thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth, a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; a nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favor to the young. And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down; and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, throughout all thy land. And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the Lord thy God hath given thee, in the siege and in the straitness wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee. So that the man that is tender among you, and very delicate; his eye shall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the remnant of his children which he shall leave; so that he will not give to any of them of the flesh of his children whom he shall eat; because he hath nothing left him in the siege, and in the straitness wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates. The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground

for delicateness and tenderness ; her eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter, and toward her young one, and toward her children which she shall bear ; for she shall eat them for want of all things, secretly, in the siege and straitness wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates." This last most revolting circumstance, is particularly mentioned, by Josephus, as having taken place at the siege of Jerusalem. Further, says Moses,—“ The Lord shall scatter thee among the people from the one end of the earth even unto the other ; and among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest : but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind : ” &c. And the reason assigned for all these evils is—“ Because thou wouldst not obey the voice of the Lord thy God.”

I have given this long quotation, because it so particularly describes, in the prophetic language of Moses, the calamities and troubles which in after time would come upon the Jewish nation, on account of their degeneracy and corruption ; and because, as our Saviour afterwards lamentably declared, “ they knew not the time of their visitation.”

It only remains that we make a few quotations from the prophets, and then apply the whole to the subject. Hear the prophet Isaiah. “ Wash you, make you clean ; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes ; cease to do evil ; learn to do well. If ye will be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land ; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured by the sword ; for the mouth of the Lord hath

spoken it." Again—"What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? And now, go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard; I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down; and I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned nor digged; but there shall come up briars and thorns. I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it." He then explains the meaning of this figure or parable. "For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel; and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry: they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands. Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge, and their honorable men are famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst. Therefore *hell* hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure, and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it." Here is the hell of the rich man—the calamities of the house of Israel, or Jewish nation. Let this suffice for Isaiah.

Now hear the prophet Jeremiah—(6th and 7th ch.) "Thus saith the Lord: Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest to your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein. Therefore, hear, O earth; behold I will bring evil upon this people. Thus saith the Lord: Behold a people cometh

from the north country, and a great nation shall be raised from the sides of the earth; they shall lay hold on bow and spear; they are cruel, and have no mercy. Cut off thine hair, O Jerusalem, and cast it away, and take up a lamentation on high places; for the Lord hath rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath. For the children of Judah have done evil in my sight, saith the Lord; they have set their abominations in the house which is called by my name, to pollute it. And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire. 'Therefore, behold the day is come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be called Tophet, nor the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of slaughter; for they shall bury in Tophet till there be no place; and the carcasses of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth; and none shall fray them away—for the land shall be utterly desolate.'" How remarkably was this fulfilled at the siege of Jerusalem, when 600,000 human carcasses lay unburied.

Again (chap. 19th)—“Hear ye the word of the Lord, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem: Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, the which, whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle. Because they have forsaken me, and have estranged this place, and have filled this place with the blood of innocents. Therefore, behold the days come, saith the Lord, that this place shall no more be called Tophet—but the valley of slaughter; and I will make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem; and I will cause them to fall

by the sword before their enemies ; and their carcasses will I give to be meat for the fowls of heaven, and for the beasts of the earth ; and I will make this city desolate, and an hissing ; every one that passeth by shall be astonished, and hiss, because of all the plagues thereof ; and I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons, and of their daughters, in the siege and straitness wherewith their enemies, and they that seek their lives, shall straiten them. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel : Behold, I will bring upon this city, and upon all her towns, all the evil that I have pronounced against it ; because they have hardened their necks, that they might not hear my words."

But I hasten to finish these quotations, though they might be made to a great extent ; all concurring in prophetic descriptions of the fearful judgments, calamities and distresses, which impended over the Jewish nation. One passage, in the prophecy of Ezekiel, (among many others of a similar character,) is so remarkable, and so much to our present purpose, that I must beg to be indulged in citing it. It is in the 22d chapter, as follows : " Son of man, the house of Israel is to me become dross ; all they are brass, and tin, and iron, and lead, in the midst of the furnace ; they are even the dross of silver. Therefore, thus saith the Lord God : Because ye are all become dross, behold, therefore, I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. As they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it ; so will I gather you in mine anger, and in my fury, and I will leave you there, and melt you. Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the

midst thereof. As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the Lord have poured out my fury upon you."

Can any one have a doubt of the true application of this prediction? We should think not. And does not our Saviour, in the parable of the tares, evidently allude to the same events and calamities, under the same figure of a *furnace*? Notice his language. "As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world—(meaning the end of that age, or dispensation of the Jews.) The Son of man shall send forth his angels, (messengers or agents,) and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

To the same period, and the same events, the prophet Malachi obviously alludes, in the close of his prophecy: "For, behold, the day cometh that shall burn as doth an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch."

But we have done with our quotations to this point. Do you see their application, my hearers, to the latter part of our parable? You will observe the rich man is represented as intimating that the evidence of the truth afforded his brethren was *insufficient*; and that should they be furnished with more direct and certain testimony relative to their danger, and the means of avoiding it, it would produce their conversion. And he thinks a messenger sent to them from the dead,

would be most certainly effectual. "If one went unto them from the dead, they will repent." To his request Abraham answers, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear *them*;" and to his renewed importunity the venerable father replies, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."*

These answers fully imply, according to our views of the parable, that the writings of Moses and the prophets are sufficiently explicit, and offer to the Jews all necessary information, admonition and counsel, if they were disposed to attend to them; but that if they were not,—if through inattention and obstinacy they became blind to the true meaning of those scriptures, and perverted them by their own vain conceits and traditions, a messenger sent from the dead would not prove more effectual. Still they would not be *persuaded*. For, let it be considered, the appearance of a person from the dead, would be but a *transient* exhibition, and would occasion but a momentary surprise; nor could he give any clearer or more convincing evidence

* "If one went unto them from the dead." If the term *dead* here should also be understood metaphorically, as designating the *Gentiles*, which is not improbable, then the request of the rich man would seem to intimate that he supposed if a messenger or herald from among *them*, who had embraced the faith of Abraham, should go to the Jews with the gospel, they would be convinced of the truth of Christianity, and be persuaded to repent and receive it. But in this view, the reply of the patriarch also intimates, that, until the Jews shall be convinced by their *own* scriptures, that the Messiah has indeed come, in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, they will not be convinced of their error in rejecting him, by the scriptures of the *New Testament*, or by any *Gospel* message or messenger. This measure has been sufficiently tried, and has always proved unsuccessful.

of his divine mission, or the truth of his message, than the writings of Moses and the prophets furnish.

Nay, none equal to them ; for these are a *standing* testimony, which the Jews might constantly consult ; and many of the most important predictions contained in them have been fulfilled with astonishing accuracy and minuteness, in events relating to their own nation.

To this purpose we have made a number of important extracts from those sacred records, with which the past and present history of that people so exactly coincide, and which also so amply confirm the truth of the New Testament revelation, and the divine mission of Jesus of Nazareth as the promised Messiah. In this view of the subject, it appears as though nothing but the most perverse obstinacy, and fatal, nay, even judicial blindness, can account for the Jews' rejection of Christ and his gospel, and for their still continuing in unbelief, and consequently, in their dispersed, degraded, and miserable condition,—a hissing, and a reproach, and a by-word among all the nations of the earth, according to the prophetic declarations of Moses and the prophets.

In this deplorable state of disappointment, anxiety and vexation, it may truly be said of them, in the figurative language of David,—“the sorrows of death compass them, and the pains of hell get hold upon them ; they find trouble and sorrow.” It is, however, infinitely satisfactory, that we are assured, by the un-failing word of prophecy, that even from the *lowest hell* they shall yet be restored by the Deliverer out of Sion, who shall “turn away ungodliness from Jacob, and perverseness from Israel ; and that when, abiding no longer in unbelief, they shall, at the appointed time,

gladly receive their own long rejected Messiah, singing hosannas to the son of David, and saying, "blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

We have still a few remarks to offer relative to Abraham's reply to the request of the rich man—that one should be sent from the dead to his brethren, to warn them of their danger. Abraham's answer implies that the admonitions and warnings given to the Jews by Moses and the prophets were sufficient. And that one from the dead, or from the invisible world, would have no *new* revelation to make to them of any terrors or sufferings to which they were liable beyond what were plainly revealed and declared in their own scriptures.

And now, my hearers, this I think, presents a forcible argument in favor of the illustration we have given of the parable; and plainly indicates that the state of the rich man, said to be in *hell*, was designed as a figurative representation of the calamities and troubles of the house of Israel, or the Jewish people, in *this world*. Because the writings of Moses and the prophets do no where teach the doctrine of endless hell torments in a future state, nor contain a single threatening of the kind.

What was the general tenor of Moses's language to the Israelites, whom with great reason he often calls a rebellious people? It was in substance as follows: that if they would fear the Lord and be obedient, they should be prosperous and happy above all people; but that if they should be disobedient and rebellious, they should be visited with evil diseases and sore sicknesses; should be cursed in their basket and in their store—be driven out of their land by their enemies, and

scattered, few in number, among all the nations of the earth, &c. But did he ever tell them that the vengeance of Heaven would pursue them in another world, and torment them *there* forever? No; he never intimated to them any thing of the kind. And yet it cannot be doubted that he would have faithfully warned the people under his charge, of such sufferings, if he had known or believed that they were in any danger of such punishment and misery in a future state.

What was the language of the prophets? It was in substance as follows: "If ye will be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye be disobedient and rebellious, ye shall be devoured by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." But not a word escapes them about the torments of hell in another world. The irresistible inference is, that they knew of no such sufferings. Indeed, I believe no preachers or writers of note, attempt to prove the doctrine of punishment and suffering in a future state, by an appeal to the scriptures of the *Old Testament*.

Dr. Campbell, the celebrated Scotch Presbyterian divine, holds the following plain language upon the subject: "It is plain, that in the Old Testament, the most profound silence is observed in regard to the state of the deceased." And he clearly intimates that the doctrine of hell torments is of *heathen* origin. He says, "On this subject of a future state, we find a considerable difference in the popular opinions of the Jews in our Saviour's time, from those which prevailed in the days of the ancient prophets." And he tells us how this change of opinion came to take place among the Jews;—that it was in consequence of "their inter-

course with the pagans, in the time of the captivity." From *them* they imbibed the doctrine of a retribution and of punishment in a future state. He says, "The Jews did not indeed adopt the *pagan fables* on this subject, nor did they express themselves entirely in the same manner; but their general train of thinking came pretty much to coincide." He admits that the *Old Testament* is silent upon the subject of future punishment, but that it was taught in *pagan fables*, and that the Jews learned it in their intercourse with them.

The pagan oracles, or fables, do indeed contain descriptions of *hades* and *tartarus*, as the receptacle of souls, where horrid sufferings are endured:—

" And torture without end still urges, in
A fiery deluge, fed with ever-burning
Sulphur, unconsumed."—

But the faithful father, refers not the rich man's brethren to *heathen fables*, nor unauthorized Jewish traditions; but to the inspired writings of Moses and the prophets, which contain all necessary instructions and warnings for the Jewish people under that dispensation, without the terrors of endless torments in another world. And these sacred records, if duly attended to, would lead them to embrace the long predicted Messiah and His gospel,—the new and better covenant, established upon better promises, bringing life and immortality to light.

This reply of father Abraham, furnishes, we think, an unanswerable objection to the doctrine of hell torments in a future state, which this parable has been commonly thought to inculcate; and also affords an argument in favor of the exposition and application

given of it in these Lectures, which, but for popular opinion and prejudice founded on long but unauthorized tradition, would, we think, appear conclusive and irresistible.

We have finished our illustration of this noted parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, confessedly one of the most important passages among the teachings of our Saviour. We have examined it with much care and pains, and have aimed to give it an impartial and thorough investigation. It has occupied much more time than we anticipated, and about double the number of Lectures that we had calculated. Yet we do not discover any part that might have been advantageously omitted, or much contracted. And I have been much gratified in observing, by the numerous congregation that has attended through the whole course, and the patient and very particular attention that has been given, that the discussion has been in a good degree interesting.

We promised, if time would permit, at the close of this last Lecture of the series, to give an analysis of the whole. This, you will perceive, by the space already occupied in the present discourse, must necessarily be very short.

In the first Lecture, we proceeded to consider the passage as it appears to have been commonly understood; as containing a statement of facts and circumstances concerning *two individuals*—a rich man, and a beggar. We noticed the condition and character of each of them distinctly, together with their death.

In the second discourse, we took notice of the disposition that was made of these two individuals at, or subsequently to, their death. The common

opinion of the meaning of the phrase, Abraham's bosom—the opinion also that the rich man went immediately to a place of punishment in a future state, called *hell*. We showed, at considerable length, that if this was to be understood as a real occurrence, according to the literal meaning of the language employed, it was the only one of the kind, of which we have any account in the Bible. The third Lecture was almost wholly employed in considering the meaning of the word *hell*. Its derivation—the *ancient* and *modern* understanding of it,—the use and application generally made of it by the clergy and others, &c.

In the fourth was noticed the rich man's *prayer*, or his *first* request to Abraham; together with the patriarch's answer. We gave, also, what is the common opinion of the *great gulf*, with several extracts from Adam Clarke's commentary upon it, &c.

In the fifth Lecture, we considered the rich man's second petition,—the *object* of it, together with father Abraham's reply to this also. We closed this Lecture with an important query, concerning the supposed liability of mankind to future endless punishment. In all these Lectures, we stated, under each particular, our objections to the commonly received interpretation, and the reasons for them.

In the sixth discourse, we commenced giving, definitely, *our own* opinion of the meaning of the passage. Showed that it was evidently a *paraboli- cal* representation, and not to be understood literally. We then began an examination of the context, which was continued through that Lecture and most of the seventh. We particularly noticed the *immediate* connexion of the

parable, and explained what we understood to be designated by the rich man clothed in purple, &c.

In the eighth Lecture we took up the description of the beggar,—showed what we understood to be represented under *that* character—what by his *death*—his being carried by the *angels* to *Abraham's bosom*, &c. ; and how also the rich man's death and burial was to be understood,—and what was the meaning of his being in hell. We then gave, very particularly, *our own* views of the meaning of the *great gulf*—inquired whether it would ever be *removed*, and *when*, &c.

The present Lecture, which finishes the course, you have just heard. In it we have considered the case of the rich man's five brethren---his request in their behalf—the patriarch's reply, and direction to them to attend to the directions of Moses and the prophets, as being fully sufficient for their instruction and warning. And, finally, his declaration, that “If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”

If the illustration we have given of this parable shall be thought incorrect, either in substance or in any of its parts, I shall be exceedingly glad to have the error, or errors, clearly pointed out, and the true meaning of the important passage given.

We have no wish, (I speak in behalf of my brethren as well as for myself,) we have no desire to embrace error ourselves, or to teach it to others. We would not willingly pervert the sacred records in any instance, nor explain them away, nor withhold any part of their counsel. Nor would we *go beyond the word of the Lord, to add any thing of our own mind*; nor

give countenance to what—after careful examination—we honestly believe has been added by *others*; or to any constructions of the word of God which we have become persuaded are erroneous,—however long and generally such constructions may have been approved, and by whatever *human* authority they may have been sanctioned. The *truth* is as valuable, and the knowledge of it as desirable to us as to others; we would search for it as for hid treasure.

The terrors of a future state, which have been so long and so fearfully set forth by public teachers and ministers of the word, and which the subject of the foregoing Lectures is thought fully to warrant, we believe the scriptures, fairly and consistently illustrated, do not contain; and therefore that the exhibition of such terrors is not useful, but injurious. “The gospel of the grace of God;” the proclamation of “good tidings to all people,” which pre-eminently displays the goodness and the glory of God, will be found most salutary and effectual in leading sinners to repentance. May God, of his infinite mercy, give us a right understanding of his word, of the writings of Moses and the prophets, and of the gospel of Jesus our Saviour, to our unspeakable comfort and joy. Amen.

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